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# *The I AMS of Christ:*

A Contribution to Christological Thought.

BY

SAMUEL H. GIESY, D.D.

CHRIST CHURCH, NORWICH, CONN.

*“Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ.  
Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.  
When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man,  
Thou didst humble Thyself to be born of a Virgin.  
When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death,  
Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.  
Thou sittest at the right hand of God,  
In the Glory of the Father.”*

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“Christ does not simply order and prescribe the process of redemption, but accomplishes the whole work in Himself; so that it is not merely **BY** Him, but **IN** Him, that it is made to reach the world, under the most perfect and all-sufficient form; since He stood in full union with God and was free from all sin. Thus the Person of its Founder, in the case of Christianity, becomes identified with its whole constitution, as in no other religion besides. Moses was the medium simply, **THROUGH** which a particular institute was established, for himself as much as for others. Not so Christ. The religion which He brought into the world, was not merely given by Him; it was **IN** Him, and remains **IN** Him still, as its living fountain; He is **HIMSELF** its grand constituent, as being the perfect, everlasting Redeemer, and as such, the One without a fellow, over against whom all others stand as subjects for redemption. That which constitutes the special **BEING** of Christ, makes Him to be what He is and gives Him thus His highest significance for the world, is the absolute **UNITY OF THE DIVINE AND HUMAN IN HIS PERSON**. Deity and manhood in Him come fully together and are made one. This is the last ground of Christianity. Here above all are we to look for its distinctive character.” **ULLMANN.**

O Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life; Grant us perfectly to know Thy Son Jesus Christ to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life; that, following the steps of Thy holy Apostles, we may steadfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life; through the same Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.





I.

Christ's Self-Consciousness True God-  
Consciousness.

“Angels—Archangels! glorious  
Guards of the Church victorious!  
Worship the Lamb!  
Crown Him with crowns of light,—  
One of the Three by right,—  
Love,—Majesty,—and Might,—  
The Great I AM!”

## I.

### Christ's Self-Consciousness True God's Consciousness.

*"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was I AM."*—ST. JOHN VIII. 58.

*"And Moses said unto God, Behold when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, What is His Name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."*—EXODUS III. 13, 14.

Names are vital things. They represent persons. They stand for selfhood and honor. Interpenetrating each other, they are one and inseparable. Here is actual identity. To touch, then, a man's name is to touch his real self, the one part most essential and vital. Hence the current phrase, "in the Name of God," is the well understood equivalent for God Himself; and so blaspheming the Sacred Name is the same as blaspheming Him (Lev. xxiv. 11-16).

Names not only represent but reveal persons. Originally they were not the arbitrary symbols they

have now commonly come to be. So far as a single word could do it, they gathered up and expressed the essential character of the persons, whether Divine or human, for whom they stood: all that was thought or felt to lie at the very root of their being. This deep significance belonged especially to Biblical names. The connection here was inward and essential, not outward and accidental. Inward correspondences either suggested or designated the suitable name—peculiarities of nature, office, work, age, relations, exigencies. This gave them wondrous significance, fitness, and power.

Said the angel of the Annunciation, "Thou shalt call His name *JESUS*; *for* He shall save His people from their sins" (St. Matt. i. 21). How, at a single stroke, this singularly suitable and significant name defines and declares the alone saving power of Christ as centred mainly in the mysterious constitution of His Person: His own true and proper name by nature and by redemptive act, who, "before Abraham," "before all worlds," one with God, "emptied Himself of His glory" "to become the sinless man among sinful men!"

Names are as well tremendously potent things. They have represented hitherto the mightiest factors in the world's life. They have stood for the impelling and sustaining forces, whether Divine or human, back



of all history—inspiring courage, purpose, high enterprise, and kindling the bright flame of passionate devotion and personal sacrifice—the very abnegation of self.\* And they do still stand for all that men hold vital and most dear in religion, in philosophy, in politics. They embody ideas, principles, religious processes, historic movements, civil, social and moral problems. Symbols, watchwords, battle-cries, rallying-points, they crystallize the mightiest energies of mankind, and shape them into definite issues. Arousing popular enthusiasm, a name is made the sign, the expression of the general mind and will, right or wrong; the very bond and badge of unity.

This potency of names takes on the widest range, operates across centuries and continents. Witness the power of that Name which is re-creating humanity, which stands everywhere for the most beneficent activities and the sweetest charities in our modern world, the synonym of the purest life, the symbol of the highest civilization. To perceive no importance and little significance in names is but the sheerest affectation of the meekness of intellect.

Biblical nomenclature reads us a different lesson. The Divine names were profoundly significant. Embodying the highest reach of man's thought of God, expressing as far as a human word may the human

sense of His various aspects, they are the index and exponent of the moral development of nations. More than anything else they reflect the growth of religious ideas. A study of them is important as showing especially the progressive nature of the Divine revelation. Unity and Personality broadly distinguish the Hebrew sense of God; and into the names employed to express this true conception there is thrown an earnest and unmistakable protest against the polytheistic materialism of the world's gray dawn.

Two names are most conspicuous in early Scripture—*Elohim* and *Jehovah*: the one abstract and generic, the other personal and proper. *Elohim*, the plural of intensity, from *El*, "Strong," as *El-Elyon*, "Lofty, Exalted," as *El-Shaddai*, "Powerful," denoted simply the attribute of majesty and might—the One Almighty, the God of Nature. This first distinctive name marked His creative energy, His relation to outward nature without the slightest reference either to personal or moral qualities. It stood for omnipotence; embodied man's thought of God as, contemplating on every side the manifestation of that awful power, he was himself hushed into silence. Its sense is still continued in the assertion of the Creed: "The Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." At most, an abstract and transcendental conception, it is the one name that puts God at the

remotest distance from man, trembling even while wondering and worshipping.

However, the Hebraic sense of God went beyond these ideas of might, of majesty, of awful power. Personal and moral properties constituted an original and essential element of the Divine character. A unique name is employed to denote this side of direct personal interest in mankind. Older than the time of Moses, by unusual circumstances, by Divine procedure, it is invested with a freshness, fulness, and force of meaning which until now had not been and could not be fairly understood.<sup>1</sup>

In this fresh investiture of meaning, God Himself takes the initiative. By startling action and by specific word, He unveils His absolute, self-existent, and independent Being. The revelation is made in concrete, historic and popular form. To enfranchise a horde of slaves, long oppressed and down-trodden, and fashion them into a sacred people, was its immediate occasion. To a movement, so perilous and so persistent, what incentive can be adequate? And to a people, so utterly broken and crushed in spirit, whence come unfailing support? On the verge of this great national emergency, to the man appointed to lead them forth from bitter bondage, there came out of Horeb's *burning bush*—symbol of the Divine

<sup>1</sup> Oehler, *Old Testament Theology*, Day's Trans., p. 97.

Presence—the overpowering sense of his high commission and the necessary guarantee of its final accomplishment. It came in the Divine Name JEHOVAH—"I AM THAT I AM"—key-word of Infinity both of Personality and Power. Derived from the substantive verb *hayah*, "To be," there lies at the root of this Self-appropriated name the idea of *existence in motion*—"one always becoming, always making itself known in a process of becoming."<sup>2</sup>

Around this fundamental idea of Eternal Selfhood, Essential Being, the one Cause of all being, itself un-

<sup>2</sup> Oehler, *Old Test. Theo.*, p. 95, "From the (Hiphil) causative form of the verb, Jehovah carries in itself, not only the meaning 'To be,' but 'To cause to be.' The idea is not however merely having *once for all* caused existence, but that of constantly creating." *Pulpit Comm.*, Exodus, *in loc.* From Fairbairn's masterly discussion of theistic problems, *The City of God*, which came into my hands after the manuscript had been left with the publisher, I add these further sentences, at some risk of repetition. "Men are not agreed as to what part, mood and tense, of the verb was the original of the Name. Two main schools of opinion may be noted; one holds it to have come from the simple predicative, the other from the causative form of the Hebrew verb. According to the first, it means, 'He who is'; according to the second, 'He who causes to happen, or to be.' In either case the term was not, in its primitive sense, a proper name, was the third person singular of a verb so used as to denote one who had not been and could not be named, who was too exalted, too glorious, too universal and eternal in His being and action, to be known by any term or title that had been, or could be used of created things or mortal men. In either case the term is present, ascribes to Him no past, no future, only a *now*, yet a now which is above time and change." Page 125.



caused and unconditioned, "plays many a prismatic light." Here we have Unity, Personality, Infinity, Self-subsistence, Independence, Self-consistency, covenantal Faithfulness, unfailing Power, and hence, Unchangeableness in will, and promise, and far-reaching purpose. Nothing so transcendently sublime as this Divine egoism! As it meets us here, first of all, on the lips of the Divine Speaker, this great I AM denotes that "God is eternally what He is: the Being who is and remains *one* with Himself in all He thinks, purposes, and does."<sup>3</sup>

Thus signaling His entering into the stream of

<sup>3</sup> "When analyzed, this Divine name presents us with a twofold mysterious idea, that of Infinity and Personality in combination. We are first taught that God is absolute, independent, self-existent, eternal. His nature can be expressed adequately in no other terms than those of a comparison with Himself. All other things have a limit outside them; they are finite, that is to say, bounded and conditioned, produced by, or tending to, or supported by something else. But it is not so with God, who alone is Infinite, who depends on nothing, while all other things depend upon Him; who alone is that which He is, and not what others are. Other things are defined in terms of something higher and more generic. But God can only be defined as being that which He is,—the First, the Midst, and the Last, *of* whom, and *through* whom, and *to* whom are all things. The other, and complementary thought to this, is that of the Personality of God. The I which appears in both the subject and the predicate of the sentence, *i. e.*, both in the first and second clauses, can bear no other meaning. It assures us that the God of Israel desires to be known as one who is conscious of His own Being, and who distinguishes His will from that of His creatures." Wordsworth, *The One Religion*, Bampton Lectures, 1881, pp. 38, 39.

human life and history, Jehovah symbolizes the God of Revelation. This further enforcement of the grand commission gives proof of this: "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah God of your *fathers*, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, hath *sent* me unto you" (Ex. ii. 15)—living links in the chain of Divine mercy and compassion. "Here we have," says Wordsworth, "the assertion of God's will in action, of His regard for His creatures, and desire to make Himself known for their good. And this emphatic assertion of personal interest and loving care pervades the whole Bible; and is fundamental to the whole Hebrew and Christian conception of the Divinity."

In pre-eminent suitableness, the Name marked here the dawn of a new historic era. The time had come, it would seem, for this Self-sufficient, Self-existent Being to make His special Presence felt in the affairs of nations, to reveal Himself as the God of compassionate love, of helpful deliverance. The conspicuous occasion is not wanting. Israel's long bondage in Egypt must be broken. This people must be led to strike an effectual blow for freedom and national selfhood.

On one heroic man must fall the task of leadership, the glory of action. Who shall designate him? and whence shall he fetch inspiration, boldness of

heart, impelling and sustaining force for so grand an undertaking? In this new Name is embodied every motive to high purpose and steady persistence. Designating, as has just appeared, the eternal and unchangeable One, who, because changeless and eternal, keeps His covenant, performs His promise—the God of history as of nature—the Name gave to him, to whom its Self-announcement here came, the confidence and heroic endurance necessary to the vast achievement to which he is so mysteriously and unexpectedly summoned, and to the Hebrew bondsmen a depth of interest which ever after formed the key-note on which the nation's whole religious life was pitched. No wonder, then, that it became the Ineffable Name, the Tetragrammaton—four-lettered name, JHVH—held in silent and solemn awe, breathed rather than spoken. Hence the difficulty and doubt in coming to anything like exactness as to its pronunciation.

Moses, “the man of God” (Deut. xxxiii. 1; Josh. xiv. 6), whom the record shows to have been a man of heroic mould, was the elect one. He came to no self-assumed task—the wild work of the revolutionist. Heaven's choice overwhelms him with surprise. What grander life-mission could have fallen to the lot of mortal man! That Moses should at first have demurred and timidly drawn back, is only what might

be expected from one of such noble nature. True worth is always diffident. Merit shrinks from tremendous responsibility. It asks at once, "Who is sufficient for these things" (2 Cor. ii. 16)?

Anxiety is mainly expressed on two points—personal unfitness, and adequate authority for an enterprise so difficult, so hazardous, yet so grand, so full of glory and of good. Modesty makes him self-distrustful. He would throw upon another the responsibility, and the grandeur of the opportunity. The want of an accredited name, and the fear of misjudgment on the part of the wronged and suffering people themselves take away the rash confidence which, in early manhood, in quick defence of a fellow-Hebrew, led him to strike down a heartless Egyptian. Hence, this eager desire for some recognized authority: "Behold when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? What shall I say unto them" (Ex. iii. 13)?

Moses's self-distrustful "What am I?" is met by the emphatic "I AM" of God: human deficiencies offset and supplied by the fact and power of The Being without beginning and without end. Enshrining, thus, the eternity of the past and the eternity of the future—"the yesterday, the to-day, and the for ever"

of Divine identity and immutability—the Name is one with the expression in later revelation: “Who was, and is, and is to come”—ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος (Rev. iv. 8). Far better than our English version is the French Bible here, not transferring, but translating the Hebrew, so that while we are hazily reading Jehovah, they are consistently and intelligently reading L’Eternal.

Self-existent, underived and independent Being, shadowed by no dark fate, imperilled by no inexorable necessity, indicates not so much *a* being as the Root and Reason of *all* being. How this Name, then, lays bare to mortal soul the ever-living Base of all things! How much like that grand utterance further on: “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Dent. xxxiii. 27)! Could assurance of stouter, more availing Support be given? To that misgiving heart, what a tower of strength and patient endurance unto the end!

“The *Alone* Existent” allows of no confederates, no fellowship of rank and majesty. Jehovah is a name without a plural. While it thus witnessed to the Divine unity, it secured against all polytheistic confusion with consequent weakness and fear. It guaranteed a supremacy, not of mere authority over subordinate divinities, but of the total exclusion of every other being from any and all share in alike

properties or powers. The Lord of Israel is also the Lord of Egypt.

Writes a thoughtful English divine: "The I AM of God was equivalent to 'I *alone* am; I *only* have life in Myself: all power in heaven and on earth, is derived from Me.' This of itself was a wonderful, a most necessary and stimulating revelation to men who were beginning to feel that the life of a people ran out beyond itself and blended with the life and fate of other races. Of what avail could *their* God be to them unless He was also the God of the Egyptian race, of the races that held the wilderness through which they had to pass, and of the races now inhabiting the goodly land which they were to possess? unless He could break the power of Egypt, control the tribes of the desert, and subdue before them the fierce and hostile clans who had seized on the land once promised to their fathers and now promised to them?"<sup>4</sup>

To the thought of enduring existence with power to match it there is added, for the greater confidence of this heroic leader of a fugitive people, Covenantal Faithfulness. The old Elohim—the Almighty—is transfigured by this later Jehovah—an intelligent, forecasting will standing fast and sure in its wise

<sup>4</sup> *The Expositor*, Vol. I., Second Ser., p. 16, Art. *The Tetragrammaton*, by the Rev. Samuel Cox.

and gracious purpose. "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne." A thousand contingencies lie back of earthly thrones—misrule, anarchy, revolution, the fickle will of the populace, mad ambition, and death, at last, the leveller of all human power and greatness. The kingdom of this sovereign Ruler of angels and men shall have no end, and the throne shall never want its King. Where Infinite power is felt or known to be set in a framework of unchanging fidelity and truth there are "quietness and assurance." Heathen divinities were felt to be mighty, and feared because suspected of being uncertain and capricious. "Strength," it has been said, "is not an absolute security against change, change of purpose, of aim, of will. To the Hebrews, therefore, who were called to risk their very existence at the bidding of a God whom *they* hardly knew, though their fathers had known and trusted Him, what comfort and inspiration would there be in the words, 'I am Jehovah; I change not!'"

This Name, then, clearly stands for the One, Self-existent, Unchangeable, Eternal God: Self-revealed to Moses, and through him to Israel, to all the world, for all the ages. It denotes the direct opposite of mere abstract forces: absolute Intelligence and Will moving in human history, directing the affairs of men, shaping the destiny of nations, guiding the progress

of events, overruling them for the accomplishment of His great designs, making the evil intended work out the good not intended—the God of creation, “in living, progressive intercourse with men,” coming conspicuously forward as the God of Revelation and history.

The Name was itself creative. It made a people; made Israel Israel—the *raison d'être* of their unique religious development, so widely different from the whole outlying world. It made a literature, the purest and richest of all lands: law, promulgating the great foundation-principles of morality, ever “making to righteousness,” lyric poetry woven into the sacred songs of all after ages, prophecy, gilding the far-off future with the foregleams of the “Lo, I come,” joined to a history all aglow with the thought, and life, and inspiration of the being and character of the One God, Personal, Eternal, Moral. It made a religion, possessing their spirits, creating their institutions, holding through long centuries their faith and fervor, the root and basis of the One Religion of the world—Christianity, the interpretation of Judaism, its confirmation and counterpart, its fragrant flower, its fairest fruit, and so creative of a new humanity, a new civilization, a new world.

It is impossible, then, to mistake its profound significance and fitness where first we meet this tre-



mendous I AM. As the essential nature for which it stands, so the name itself is incommunicable. It belongs to God exclusively. So wrote the Psalmist: "That men may know that Thou, whose name *alone* is JEHOVAH, art the most High over all the earth" (Psalm lxxxiii. 18).

And yet this Name with the Divine nature it represents is appropriated by Christ; appropriated with no sign of diffidence, or self-distrust, or thought of impious conceit. He dares to declare His own eternity of being, seizing on the sole property of God. He dares to name Himself God, though man. Amazing distinction to which he lays claim! "Stepping out of the years of time, disentangling Himself from the human and all its limits and conditions, He plants Himself in Infinity, and, comprehending the yesterday, the to-day, and the for ever of history, declares Himself at every point the 'I AM.'" Two little words these! But what compass and power of meaning they take on His lips! They make all the reality and efficiency of his Saviourhood. They proclaim the mystery of His Person—the unity of Divinity and humanity; they proclaim that His true being antedated His time-birth; antedated the birth and times of Abraham; in fact, ran back into the indeterminable eternities. "Before Abraham was I AM." As of old, so here the name clearly ex-

presses absolute, self-existent, independent, personal Being.

The exasperated Jews well understood at the time the startling import of His claim. It fell on their ears as horrible blasphemy; and they proceed at once to show, according to the penalty of the old Levitical law (Lev. xxiv. 16; Acts vii. 58), their indignant sense of His words. Such writers as deny this obvious meaning are without a satisfactory and self-consistent explanation of their hasty and violent intent.

“He unveils a consciousness of Eternal Being. He speaks as One on whom time has no effect, and for whom it has no meaning. He is the I AM of ancient Israel; He knows no past, as He knows no future; He is unbeginning, unending Being; He is the eternal ‘Now.’ This is the plain sense of His language, and perhaps the most instructive commentary upon its force is to be found in the violent expedients to which Humanitarian writers have been driven in order to evade it.”<sup>5</sup>

All that is of vital interest in theoretical and practical Christianity centres in the essential Godhead

<sup>5</sup> Canon Liddon, *Our Lord's Divinity*, p. 188. “There could be no more distinct assertion of His divine nature. Those who deny this must either prove that He never spoke these words, or must believe that He—the most lowly and sinless and meek-hearted of men—was guilty of a colossal and almost phrenetic intoxication of vanity and arrogance.” Canon Farrar, *Life of Christ*, Vol. II., p. 78.

of Jesus Christ. Either it is stupendous truth, or a monstrous pretense and lie. This fourth Gospel gives no uncertain sound, from golden prologue to re-assuring epilogue: "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name" (St. John xx. 31). His true Divinity is so pronounced, recurs so frequently, that it may well be named the Gospel of the Incarnation.<sup>6</sup>

The authenticity of this Gospel is now no matter of inquiry. Its distinctive feature—what I may venture to term its thorough Personalness—is the chief point of consideration. "The frequency of the pronoun *ἐγώ* in St. John's Gospel, compared with the Synoptists, points to the fulness of this *personal* revelation of our Lord." Everywhere the Person of Christ is prominent—not "I" alone, but this I AM of far greater purport and force. "I" is the exponent of independent personality; stands for intelligent,

<sup>6</sup> "It is not possible to read the fourth Gospel and not see that from one end to the other the writer's object is to draw out the identity of the Word made flesh with an invisible and ever-present Being who is the fountain of life and light and truth. It is not after all the pre-existence of the Word which is the keynote to his teaching, but the identity of the Word with a Being whose existence could not possibly be dated from the moment that the Word was made flesh, but whose existence in the present implied and involved His existence in the past." Leathes, *Witness of St. John to Christ*, p. 45.

self-conscious being: God's image in man, all that is meant by moral and responsible activity. Tennyson puts it thus, in his *De Profundis*:

"That I am I,  
With power on my own act and on the world."

But this "I AM" goes beyond mere human selfhood. It is the distinct and emphatic avowal of Eternal Consciousness. Here and elsewhere on the lips of this Holy One, it stands the exponent of Divinity in humanity, for Him,

"Who wrapt His Godhead in a veil  
Of our inferior clay."

All is of a piece in this Gospel: the colossal Character and His colossal Claim. It is conspicuously "I." "I and My Father are one"; "I am from above"; "I came down from heaven." Faint echoes of this come out in the other Gospels, but here it is like the great swell of the organ in fulness of utterance, in depth of sound. We are led thereby, in a most unmistakable way, right into the heart and core of the whole Evangelical movement, its Personal Centre—the one Incarnate Mystery. In the most unmistakable way, indeed; for, to get rid of this stupendous Fact, the main effort of all destructive criticism seems to be to get rid of this fourth Gospel, by hook or by crook.

How strongly Augustine says, "While the three other Evangelists remain below with the man Christ Jesus, and speak but little of His Godhead, John, as if impatient of setting his foot on the earth, rises, from the very first words of his Gospel, not only above the earth, and the span of air and sky, but above all angels and invisible powers, till he reaches Him by whom all things were made. Not in vain are we told by the Evangelists, that John leaned on the bosom of the Lord at the last Passover feast. He drank in secret at that divine spring." Standing so close to the beating heart of the God-man, there is, on the part of this last of the Apostolic men, no blinking the supernatural Fact, however it may be with current theorists and theories inimical to Christianity.

Just this was the *gravamen* of offence in this instance. If the Evangelist has reported this colloquy at all faithfully, these Jews showed themselves far better exegetes than unbelieving scholars in our day. Only dimly surmising at first the Speaker's pretension, they are humane and kind enough to put it all down to mental disturbance, the ravings of a madman. It is still the easy way of accounting for extraordinary things in others, either as to behavior or words. Everywhere the expression is still current, said when hardly meant: "The man is mad";

"has lost his senses." So here: "Thou hast a devil." The authorized version is misleading, and the revision only nearer the point in its marginal reading. It is not *διάβολος*, but *δαιμόνιον*—demon—a man possessed by an evil spirit, whose proper personality is suppressed and overridden by a foreign power in the way of overmastering wickedness. As indicating a man acting under satanic impulse, the word is still in popular use—a *devilish* person.<sup>7</sup>

Denying the base imputation, with singular calmness and self-possession Christ proceeds, in further declaring Himself, to free their minds from every misconception of His person and His mission. In His immediate reply, there flashes out in unequivocal language the deeper consciousness of His eternal Being: other and infinitely more than He seems to them to be; older than their great progenitor—the "I AM" of God's Self-revelation to Moses. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it and was glad."

Sneers followed. These are the weapons of the weak. Nothing so quickly reveals the weakness of a man's position. In the mind of these exasperated men, He is guilty of an enormous anachronism, and

<sup>7</sup> Olshausen, Bloomfield, Godet take *δαιμόνιον ἔχεις* as a popular mode of expression equivalent to the phrase yet current: "You are mad"; while Lange and Stier see in it the more scornful charge of actual league with satan.

they hurl at Him this annihilating sneer, as they think, "Impertinent youth, thou art not yet fifty years old, and couldst not have seen Abraham, dead already these twenty centuries!" Then comes out the full, clear disclosure of His real Self: the I AM before Abraham was born.

Note here the present *I am*, not *I was*.<sup>s</sup> This anomaly in grammar is but the utterance of the divinest Fact. It was not possible to invent a formula of speech to express so tersely yet so clearly Christ's own sense of His continuous existence, independent, and back of all time-conditions. It means more than mere pre-existence, the property of angelic beings; in fact, Self-identity with the great Jehovah speaking out of the flaming bush. No man can help seeing this, whatever its import, whatever the tremendous assumption.

It was precisely this claim of Divinity that so outraged these Jews. This, using the words of Bishop

<sup>s</sup> Wordsworth, *Greek Test. in loco*: "Why did He not say,—before Abraham was *I was*, but I AM? because he uses this word I AM, as His Father uses it; for it signifies perpetual existence, independent of all time. And therefore they charge Him with blasphemy (Chrys.). He identifies Himself with Jehovah. He who speaks was the Seed of Abraham; and yet He *was* before Abraham, and Abraham himself was made by Him. Abraham was a creature, therefore Christ did *not* say, 'before Abraham existed'—but He said, 'before Abraham was *born*'; and He did not say, 'I was made, but I AM' (Aug.)."

Ellicott, "is the only explanation of what He has said; and it is in these words so plainly asserted, that those who had constantly misunderstood can misunderstand no more. The subtleties of later days, by which men have tried to show that there is no claim to Divinity here, were not suggested to their minds. They will not acknowledge the claim, but they feel that He has made it. They have heard the fearful words which seemed to them a blasphemy, and they take up the stones which are at hand for the rebuilding of the Temple, in which they are, to cast at the Lord of the Temple."

But were not these Jews mistaken in its import, and so needlessly exasperated? After all was it anything more than a simple declaration, not of Christ's personal, but *official* superiority to Abraham? denoting the greater importance of the Messiahship over against the fatherhood of many nations (Gen. xvii. 5)? precedence of position and rank, rather than priority of being? "before Abraham," then, only as the embodiment and realization of the great Messianic idea? Doubtless, the Messiah—the burden of Jewish history, prophecy, life and longing—should, as a personage simply, outrank even the great progenitor.

But this canon of interpretation utterly fails. Neither does it satisfy the language, nor account for the indignant action of the Jews. Besides, the claim



is greater than anything simply official. In fact, it is first personal, and then official; and only as the profoundly personal sense is itself made good, can the official, in its own comprehensive action, be said to rest on a substantial basis. In the redemptive significance of the office, there can be for our own sin-burdened humanity no Messiah apart from the Divinity of His person. Hence the plain, obvious sense of this language: Christ before Abraham's birth, before all human births, before all time, before all worlds—from eternity, who “thought it not robbery to be equal with God.”

Because this, we see in Him the Personal conditions of *perfect* Saviourhood; not God alone, nor man alone, but true God and true man in mysterious and harmonious union.

Because this, we see, too, the *comprehensiveness* of His Saviourhood; not a Jew for the Jews alone, as Luther a German for Germans; but a man for the whole man and all men. He was the unifier of the race, the Second Adam of St. Paul's Epistles (1 Cor. xv. 45, 47; Rom. x. 12; Gal. iii. 28); the redemptive Head of our diverse humanity (Eph. i. 10).

“In Him the tribes of Adam boast  
More blessings than their father lost.”

He is the universal Man. The brotherhood of mankind finds in Him spiritual reality. All ethnic

differences, all social distinctions—pride of birth, and station, and nationality—are obliterated.

Because this, we see in Him the Contemporary of all ages: the One, Living Christ clothed with perennial powers of grace. He is God-man “once for all”; *once and always*. His sole redemptive virtue travels onward with the march of human life and history. He belongs to every age and nation.

No view of the Incarnation, then, approaches at all its right sense and scope which fails to see in “the word made flesh” Self-identity with “the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity.” Strange condescension and grace were displayed when the Great I AM stooped down to enter into covenant engagements with man! Stranger condescension and grace when this absolute Being stooped down to earth to take man’s very nature and bring in an everlasting salvation.

“CHRIST SON OF GOD, AND CHRIST THE SON OF MARY;

CHRIST ON THE CROSS, AND CHRIST IN KINGLY REIGN!

So sang the saints when first the song began,

So shall it rise a never-ending strain.”

II.

Christ The Principle and End of All Things.

“Of the FATHER’s love begotten,  
Ere the worlds began to be,  
He is Alpha and Omega,  
He the source, the ending He,  
Of the things that are, that have been,  
And that future years shall see,  
Evermore and evermore!

“He is here, whom seers in old time  
Chanted of, while ages ran;  
Whom the voices of the Prophets  
Promised since the world began:  
Then foretold, now manifested,  
To receive the praise of man,  
Evermore and evermore!”

From the Latin of Prudentius (405),  
*Corde natus ex Parentis.*

## II.

### Christ The Principle and End of All Things.

*"I AM Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."*—THE REVELATION I. 8.

CHRISTIAN Art, from an early period, was quick to embody in sacred symbol the only true sense of this declaration of Christ concerning Himself. The Catacombs of Rome—treasure-house of the holy dead—are full of this touching though rude sign of their undying faith in His Divinity, who once dead, is yet "alive for evermore." With similar appropriateness the ancient monogram reappears on Christian altars and glows in chancel windows.

Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, are taken to signify the beginning and end of a thing. "The numerical value of  $\mathcal{A}$  is an unit, and of  $\Omega$  is *eight* hundred; and eight is the symbol of glory." This mode of speech, thus, symbolizes the idea of completeness: primal cause and con-

summation. It was not used here for the first time. Under a Hebrew form it was common among the Rabbins. As expressing the idea of entire disobedience, they said of Adam, "he transgressed the whole law, from Aleph to Tau." In English, the same idea of wholeness is expressed by the familiar formula from A to Z: the beginning of a thing and the end towards which it looks and in which it comes at length to its own self-interpreting purpose.<sup>1</sup>

This inherent idea—first cause and last sense and meaning—must guide us in any honest endeavor to come to a right and full understanding of the formula in the mouth of this Divine Speaker. For, be He who He may, there can be no question as to His absolute Divinity. Exegetical exactitude admits of no other thought or application.

Who then is the Speaker? Who dares to apply to Himself these tremendous words, involving such depth of meaning? It will hardly be enough to make the simple answer of the text, "The Lord God." For, if the slightest uncertainty attaches to the passage on this point from difference of read-

<sup>1</sup> "This use of letters of the alphabet of the *Greek* or *Gentile* world, and not of the *Hebrew*, in the introduction of this Book, as a designation of Jesus Christ, and adopted by Himself as such, is characteristic of the universality of the Dispensation which it reveals, and of the incorporation of all nations of the earth in the mystical Body of Christ." Bishop Wordsworth, *Greek Test. in loc.*

ing in the Greek, it fails so far forth as proof of the Divinity of Christ.

The best authorities give, *Λέγει Κύριος ὁ Θεός*. Ewald, however, among others regards ὁ Θεός—"the God"—as an interpolation. The weight of testimony is against this, and in favor of its being an original part of the passage. Basing their opinion on this fact, some writers regard God Himself as the Speaker, finding support for their view in the language directly following: "Which is, and which was, and which is to come, the ALMIGHTY," applicable, they think, to God rather than Christ. In this view, the passage is simply a confirmation on God's part "of what the Apocalyptist had just been saying in respect to the coming of Christ, and the consequent punishment of His enemies—as though simply giving this warrant, 'I, the Almighty and unchangeable God, will execute this commination.'"

Did this formula stand nowhere else, there might be some ground for this narrower interpretation. But it reappears twice (Rev. xxi. 6; xxii. 13), and in connections where undoubtedly the Speaker is Jesus Christ. In the first passage, it is the Being enthroned as the Judge of mankind who appropriates this stupendous title with all its Divine contents—not abstract Deity, but the incarnate and glorified Saviour of mankind. There is no room for doubt

on this point. The whole burden of Scripture is in its favor.<sup>2</sup> More definite is the second passage. Here Jesus names Himself as the Speaker. It is, "I JESUS." Against the "angel-interpreter," verse 8, of some commentators being the speaker is the fact, of his putting away, with evident horror, all John's worshipful approaches on the ground of pure creatureship and co-ordinate service at utter variance with any pretense to the incommunicable attributes of self-existence and absolute eternity.

Besides, the title of the Book is singularly significant. The prologue styles it, "The Revelation of JESUS CHRIST," indicating its Christological Substance, and not its symbolic form simply. It is His Unveiling whose name is the "Word of God" (Rev. i. 2, 9; St. John i. 1, 14);<sup>3</sup> whose sacrificial work finds its

<sup>2</sup> St. Matt. xxiv. 30; xxv. 31; Acts x. ; 42; xvii. 31; Rom. ii. 16. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10; Titus ii. 13; Rev. i. 17. "The Fourth Gospel," Prof. Plumptre observes, "alone records the fact, which the writer, we must believe, alone of all the four had seen with his own eyes, of the *pierced* side, and of the water and the blood." *Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia*, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Rightly Prof. Plumptre sees "in the 'Word of God' to which St. John bore witness more than the spoken message of the Gospel. He who beheld in Christ the 'Word made flesh,' who, even in the earlier stage of thought to which the Apocalypse belongs, saw Him who was faithful and true, on whose head were many crowns, who was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and whose name was called, 'THE WORD OF GOD' (Rev. xix. 11-13), was not likely in his opening words to use that name in any lower sense than when he wrote afterwards, 'In the begin-



most significant symbol in the "slain Lamb" (Rev. v. 12; xiii. 8); whose "blood" brings spiritual cleansing (Rev. i. 5; vii. 14); who, by reason of the fact and power of His glorious resurrection, is named "the first begotten of the dead" (Rev. i. 5); whose Judgment-work is announced as His coming whom men "*pierced*" (Rev. i. 7). Doubtless the one Personal subject of the Book is the incarnate, crucified, and glorified Jesus to whom the Baptist had previously and explicitly directed admiring gaze under the appellation, "THE LAMB OF GOD" (St. John i. 29); and He it is, who here is the Divine Speaker, claiming in this grand title, "*the Alpha, the Omega,*" to be all and what the eternal, self-existent God alone can be: the Source of all being, the deepest ground and final goal of all things; *by* whom and *for* whom all things were made (St. John i. 2, 3; Col. i. 16). Much has been lost in the omission from the authorized version of the definite article in the original, "showing," Bishop Wordsworth says, "His co-eternity and co-equality with the Father." And let it also be noted, that the close of the Book stands in full agreement with its Personal opening. It is, "The grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST" (Rev. xxii. 21)—

ning was the Word' (St. John i. 1), or, that the 'Word of Life was that which he had seen with his eyes, and had looked upon, and his hands had handled (1 John i. 1)." *Epistles to Seven Churches of Asia*, p. 5.

the familiar benediction which closes St. Paul's epistles. Thus, epilogue and prologue are one. There is, it is promptly conceded, but one Being whom this title fits; who can wear it with propriety, with grace and without dispute: the Great I AM, the absolute Source of universal nature. If Christ be the Speaker here, as has been shown, then does He, with neither scruple nor slightest self-embarassment, take to Himself, with the name, the sole property of JEHOVAH. Thus Self-appropriated and Self-applied, it is, only in fuller, deeper utterance, the echo of that other explicit announcement of co-eternity with the Father: "Before Abraham was I AM." How all this serves to bring out, in noon-day clearness, the Self-conscious unity of Christ with the Eternal Father, according to His own profound word: "I and My Father are one."<sup>4</sup>

Of course, in this sense and Self-application, this

<sup>4</sup> Says a recent Bampton Lecturer, "If Jesus was really at the bottom of all existence—the Life which really underlay all the manifestations of life, the I AM, who is the Cause, the Stay, the Hope, the Object, and the End of all creation—then it follows as a necessary consequence that there can be neither Beginning nor End of His existence. He must be from ages of ages unto ages of ages, even from all eternity to all eternity. For His is the only self-existent life, and the world and all things that are therein, are but the breath of His mouth, and as the shadow of the style upon the dial-plate compared with the sun that casts it." *The Witness of St. John to Christ*, by the Rev. Stanley Leathes, p. 62.

language takes rank with God's own representation, in ancient Scripture, of His absolute character. "Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel and his Redeemer the Lord of hosts: I am the first and I am the last, and beside Me there is no God" (Is. xliv. 6; xli. 4; xlviii. 12). Without astounding impertinence and boldest effrontery no created being could predicate of himself the name, and honor, and glory, and power of absolute Deity. Yet, however much it may stagger the human mind, the only consistent and satisfactory explanation of this stupendous claim on the lips of Christ is His essential unity with God.

Withal, then, it is to be taken as the avowal of His Personal place in the Godhead as strong and unambiguous as language could well make it. And it is to be taken, too, as the distinct avowal of His unique relation to the whole order of the world mainly under its threefold aspect—nature, man, and grace: The Principle and End of universal Nature, of universal History, and of universal Redemption.

Outward nature is *by* Him and *for* Him. As with one voice, Holy Scripture, earlier and later, proclaims Him the efficient Cause back of all things. Says the old Psalmist of Israel, "By the word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." "By the Word

of God," in this and similar connection elsewhere, is not to be understood the mere fiat of Jehovah, impersonal activity, the putting forth of abstract power, but the Personal organ rather of every manifestation of the Divine Being, whether in creation or by revelation; suggested, so Godet thinks, by the "*God-said*" of Gen. i., "the speaking Word" back of all spoken words.<sup>5</sup> Nothing is clearer than that the later writers so understood it. Says St. John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." Writes another apostle with distinct reference to what Christ was to the world before His incarnation: "The Image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by

<sup>5</sup> The Septuagint uses the very term *Λόγος* instead of the usual *ῥῆμα* as the full equivalent of the Hebrew *Debar*. Delitzsch says, "The New Testament doctrine of the Word incarnate in Christ is here gived in germ, *im Werden*." Godet cites several passages from the Aramæan paraphrases of the Old Testament where "the name of the *Word* (*Memra*) of *Jehovah* was substituted for that of *Jehovah* each time that God manifested Himself in a sensible manner and in nature." *Comm. on St. John*, Vol. I., p. 179. Also Liddon, *Our Lord's Divinity*, p. 63.

Him, and for Him, and He is *before all things*, and by Him all things consist" (Col. i. 15-17). The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews follows in the same strain, declaring that the Maker of the worlds was He, who, after He had by Himself purged our sins, "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high," "being the Brightness of His glory, and the express Image of His person."

Universal nature, as it stands out to the thoughtful eye, reveals a wonderful progression, through various gradations of inanimate, rising up to animate, nature, and through all the gradations of organic life up to man, the last sense and meaning, as the sovereign, in fact, of all below him—lower than angels, yet himself "crowned with honor and glory." Where system obtains, where order reigns, where law holds, where a unifying purpose is manifest, where, through the long lapse of ages, all reaches steadily on to a definite object, upon a definite plan, it argues a forecasting Soul holding together the otherwise loose and disjointed play of things, and at last bringing to pass its own vast thought. "Science, falsely so called," would lead all astray here; would evolve this living world out of "non-living matter"; would supply an unintelligent basis for this universal order of things. How all this like a glorious temple without so much as wise architect and builder! Said

Christ once, "Whose is this image and superscription?" The seal must have its answering counterpart. The world of nature answers to "the Image of the invisible God."<sup>6</sup>

Besides the Source, Christ is the Solution also of universal nature, its goal, its last sense and meaning. Earth constitutes the grand theatre of human life and history. Man stands at the summit, the

<sup>6</sup> "What Revelation insists on, in perfect conformity with the common sense and verdict of mankind, and with the necessary conclusions of the highest reason, is the fundamental truth, that, behind all material nature and its phenomena, behind all that exists and which man can apprehend, there is a Personal and intelligent and Almighty Will, a Self-existent Uncreated Life, the First Great Cause of all, the present Sustainer and Upholder of all, the all-wise and all-merciful Ruler and Controller of all." Medd, *The One Mediator*, p. 98. "*Omne vivum ex vivo*"—no life without antecedent life. "Evolution must have life before it can trace its multiplication and development, must have both 'organism and environment' before it can show us the genesis of species and the descent of man." Fairbairn, *City of God*, p. 59. Spontaneous generation has been rejected by the most eminent scientists of the age, European and American, as a purely gratuitous assumption. At the congress of German naturalists, held at Munich in 1876, the illustrious Virchow—a name at which the savants of Europe bow—declared that it was not only an undemonstrated theory, but that Haeckel "never would be able to explain to us how, from the midst of this inorganic world, in which nothing changes, life can come forth." De Pressense, *Study of Origins*, p. 156. Again, at the late Tercentenary of the University of Edinburgh, in the presence of the assembled magnates of Europe, he declared with great emphasis, "Evolution has no scientific basis." *Christian Thought*, Aug., 1884, p. 74.

masterpiece and mouthpiece of all creation. Nothing outranks him. With form erect, countenance lifted heavenward, eye flashing with intelligence, brow the sign and seat of thought, tongue shaped to articulate speech, voice sweet with love or strong with passion, breast stirred by high purpose or moved by holy aspiration—the very shrine of immortal powers—man at once is both the image of God and the mirror of nature.

Last in the wonderful process—the self-interpreting purpose towards which it looked from the beginning—his advent is long delayed until the earth itself comes to be a fit habitation and abode. For him all that went before was a preparation and as well a prophecy. As the theatre and scene of self-conscious life and moral struggle—life both on its historic and spiritual side as well—the earth comes at last to its full and proper end. Apart from him this beautiful world, fitted up at such an expenditure of beneficent goodness, would have been something like a wanton waste, as Gray tells us of flowers,

“Born to blush unseen,  
And waste their sweetness on the desert air.”

Without him, reverently we say it, the whole realm of nature would have been a melancholy blank. Says a vigorous writer: “The organic order

comes to its rest ultimately in Man. He is the true ideal of the world's universal life, the last aim and scope of the whole natural creation. He is the fulfilment of all its prophecies, the key to its mysteries, the exposition of its deepest and most hidden sense." Another, with eminent appropriateness, names him "the great, beautiful, and complete *bell* that announces everything." Man is the prophet as he is the monarch and lord of creation: the voice of that universal song of praise going up to Almighty God from earth, and sea, and sky. He grasps the hidden sense of things, and in manifold uses gives them intelligent utterance. He takes the silent forces of nature and makes them the quick bearer of his messages around the world.

But withal man finds not in the earth the last and highest sense of his being. He is more than the earth under its widest form. He has wants, desires, aspirations which it cannot meet. His thoughts, hopes, interests all look beyond. No less than nature, man wants a prophet to interpret to him these yearnings of the human soul after the Infinite. Man wants God; cries out for God. "Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence," is the passionate apostrophe of the ancient seer.



"But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth" (II Chron. vi. 18)? was the dream, rather the oppressive desire of the old world, consciously and unconsciously, through the long lapse of expectant ages, struggling to birth and being. Among classic people in the deification of heroic men and as well heroic virtues, among Oriental people in the monstrous incarnations of Vishnu—hideous caricatures of humanity's felt need—among the Hebrew people in the Messianic Hope which distinguished and separated them from all the world beside, there came to the surface the irrepressible anticipations of the answering Reality in the one mystery of the Incarnation.

Christ—Virgin-born yet Heaven's Emmanuel, in entire oneness and sympathy with the race yet, with elements of being and power essentially different, not from the race—was, as this Apocalypticist names Him, "the Beginning of the creation of God," and no less its *ultima thule*—its highest sense and summit. The Alpha in which all things started, He was as well the end and glory to which they steadily reached. This, indeed, was not in the poet's mind when he wrote:

"That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves;"

nevertheless, the Incarnation of Christ was the "far-off divine event" which at last came in "as the necessary complement and consummation" of the world under every view.

Its necessity is entirely misread when made the mere accident of sin. We come to no profound and proper sense of its place in the universal order of Divine movement, if it be taken as the result and remedy simply of that moral catastrophe. By the ablest theologians, generally, it is conceded that the union of the Divine nature with the human in the one person of Christ would have come to pass, not merely in the sense of "the fulness of time," but in the fulness also of God's purpose from the beginning. "The Incarnation then," says Dr. Nevin, "is the proper completion of humanity. Christ is the true ideal Man. Here is reached ultimately the highest summit of human life, which is at the same time of course the crowning sense of the world, or that in which it finds its last and full signification. This forms accordingly, without figure, the inmost and last sense of all God's works."<sup>7</sup>

The Incarnation, besides, is the true and necessary Principle of universal History, sacred and profane, and its objective point as well from the beginning.

<sup>7</sup> *The Mystical Presence*, p. 200; also, Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 250.

Man's true essence and his final destiny form the deepest problem of human inquiry. Fitly enough this profound inquiry has named itself, "The Philosophy of History." Its purpose is to search out the true principle of history and its only right end. Two opposite views obtain. One class of writers, seeing in man merely an animal of a higher order, the product himself of nature-forces, view history as the story of his gradual and progressive improvement—the struggle of endless perfectibility from powers native to himself. How well Schlegel makes answer to this vain theory: "In philosophy, as in life and history, there is no true and solid beginning for anything out of God." The other class, seeing an essential difference in man, the "image," in fact, of his Divine Original, the child of God, though fallen, hold the true principle of history and its final goal to be the restoration of the Father's lost likeness.

All anterior history reads intelligently when taken to be the prophecy of and preparation for the Advent of the Son of God in the flesh, as well in a positive as negative way.<sup>8</sup> True to His own prophetic name,

<sup>8</sup> "When I read the classics," says Müller, "I observe everywhere a wonderful preparation for Christianity; everything was exactly fitted to the design of God, as made known by the Apostles." In his Hulsean Lectures (1846), *The Unconscious Prophecies of Heathendom*—"divining what it needed, and was obscurely feeling after"; "yearning for a redeemer, and for all

"Sun of Righteousness," Christ alone makes the whole course of universal history, from first to last, luminous with a Divine, world-embracing purpose. And he who reads history, and more he who writes it with this Alpha and Omega, this inlying burden and far-off end left out, pursues amid the dusty tomes of departed greatness, whether of fame or folly, a task as hopeless and self-bewildering as the man lost in the catacombs wandering, without guide or light, amid the memorials of buried faith he knows not whither, ever plunging further into the dark abyss while thinking to gain the entrance at last.

For the time being, I limit the survey to Biblical history, running down from the Edenic promise to Bethlehem's wondrous Child, the Personal fulfilment of *the* hope long deferred. That Christ was the soul of it all, the personal Substance back of all its shadows, the key to its unique religious system, the hidden sense and real worth of its multiplied sacrifices, the sole and self-interpreting solution to which

which the true Redeemer only could give"—Archbp. Trench shows, in this negative way, a very general preparation for Christ—the dreams of the heathen world forecasting the one "Desire of *all* nations." Here, says Dr. Schaff, "the preparation for the Christian religion proceeded from below, from the wants and powers of man, as he gradually awoke to a sense of his own helplessness and the need of revelation." *Hist. of the Apost. Church*, p 139.

in due time it all came, will not, I think, be hard to make out.

Two facts are remarkable here: the multiplicity and unity of the sacred books. The Bible is truly a *one-many* book; manifold as to authorship; one as to main subject and scope. There are sixty-six books, written by well nigh as many persons, different as men well could be in intellectual power and social position, extending through a period of fifteen centuries. It was here precisely as St. Luke tells us it was with the holy Gospel, many men putting their "hand" to the work. In outward shape and form, the Bible is the work of historiographers and legislators, prophets and poets, kings and peasants, shepherds and plowmen, herdsmen and fishermen, publicans, physicians and doctors of the law skilled in all the traditions of their land and nation. What an array of authors it makes; writing in different lands and languages, under different forms of government, under different circumstances, and different social influences! How varied in style and method—biography, history, poetry, prose, prophetic utterance, didactic teaching, devotional song!<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "It comprises the writings of at least fifty different writers who lived in the most widely separated spheres. The voice which speaks to us is now that of a Gentile sorcerer, now that of a suffering prisoner, now that of a conquering king. Law-givers like Moses, autocrats like Solomon, warriors like Joshua,

Withal, how perfectly wonderful the unity of thought, theme, purpose, scope, end! Not the oneness of mere external contact, as so many treatises, for instance, on as many subjects bound up together in the same volume, something wholly arbitrary and mechanical; but of organic relation and life, standing together because belonging together, part and parcel of the same continuous and progressive revelation—one as the trunk and branches of a tree, one as the body and its members, and in themselves utterly without meaning when held separate and apart. This is the deep unity appearing here: a Divine life interpenetrating and unifying its onward thought and action; a Divine movement incorporating itself into the stream of human history; a Divine scheme linking together all its parts, stretching across the centuries, and com-

historians like Samuel, prophets like Isaiah, priests like Ezra and Jeremiah and Ezekiel, poets like David, governors like Nehemiah, exiles like Daniel, peasants like Amos, fishermen like Peter and John, tax-gatherers like Matthew, rabbis like Paul, have all contributed their quota to the sacred page. We may truly say that it is like the great tree of northern fable, whose leaves were the lives of men. It is for this reason that nations, like birds of the air, shelter themselves under the shadow of it. It is the vine of God's planting, which

‘Reacheth to every corner under heaven  
Deep rooted in the living soil of truth;  
So that men's hopes and fears take refuge in  
The fragrance of its complicated glooms,  
And cool impleached twilights.’ ”

Canon Farrar, *General Intro. to the Old Test.* in *Pulpit Comm.* P. v.

ing at length to its own answering end in the mystery of the Incarnation, the most stupendous and influential fact in the whole history of the world; moulding nations, shaping legislation, leading civilization, guiding human progress, liberating thought, elevating society, curbing human passions, and purifying the broad current of human life and action.

All constitutes a single whole. A golden thread runs through this entire web of national isolation and anticipation, solemn rites and unique institutions. One Event, one grand Character formed the unifying principle of this diverse revelation, whether standing in theophany or type, in symbol or sacrifice, in promise, or prophecy, or historic fact. The Advent of Christ in the flesh poured a flood of light into priestly act and prophetic word. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews expresses the profound truth in the case: "God, who *at sundry times and in divers manners*<sup>10</sup> spake in time past unto the fathers by the

<sup>10</sup> "Πολυμερῶς καὶ ποικιλοτρόπως *fragmentarily and multifariously*—as regards the latter adverb, illustrated by the singular differences of station and circumstances among those to whom God sent His message of inspiration; and yet further illustrated by the different ways in which that message came to them, and in which it is delivered to us; . . . sometimes in the facts of history, sometimes in isolated promises, sometimes by Urim, sometimes by dreams and voices and similitudes, sometimes by types and sacrifices, sometimes by prophets specially commissioned; . . . in the form now of annals, now of philosophy meditation, now of a sermon, now of an idyl, now of a

prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, the Brightness of His glory, and the Express Image of His person." From the moral universe strike out this "Sun of Righteousness," and the world's history, from Eden's sin onward to Christ, is an inexplicable engima, and all after history the story of the strangest infatuation of a Name with no adequate Personal reality back of it.<sup>11</sup>

All this singular diversity, however, finds unity and harmony in the one Person, Jesus of Nazareth. "*For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*" (Rev. xix. 10). All revelation at length comes in Him to its inlying sense and meaning. The Old and New Testament stand related to one another as blossom and ripe fruit, as dawn and noon-day effulgence, as promise and full accomplishment, as germ and realization. The Old without the New is an historical

lyric song; . . . sometimes by expanded details, sometimes sweeping summary. . . . As to its fragmentariness, or *progressiveness*, the revelation was given to us *πολυμερῶς*—in many parts—not all at once; it was not perfect and final; but God revealed Himself part by part. He lifted the veil fold by fold." Canon Farrar, *Gen. Intro. to the Old Test.* in *Pulpit Comm.* pp. v. vi.

<sup>11</sup> The Incarnation is no strange, and sudden, isolated, unrelated fact in the history of man but is rather the centre and key of all history. All before it led up to it: all that follows grows out of it or is subordinate to it. The very grandeur of the fact requires that it should be so." Medd, *The One Mediator*, Bampton Lectures, 1882, p. 172.



puzzle: a book full of types and prefigurements, of Messianic presentiments and foregoings with no Antitype: the New without the Old records a vast movement of world-wide significance and purpose, without presage of any sort and without permanent benefit to mankind, flashing, like a brilliant meteor, out of the darkness only to die in its own extinction: a book full of the sweetest melodies with neither prelude nor echo in the human soul. "No man," it has been ably said, "can profoundly interpret the New Testament who is not profoundly conversant with the Old. A man will come upon the New from a wrong point altogether except he come upon it along the line of Moses and the Prophets. He who comes so will find it to be New in the best sense."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> "Surely any failure to perceive and to take due account of the great truth of the continuity and progressiveness of God's dealings with mankind as fallen through successive dispensations of mercy, any disregard or forgetfulness of the essential coherence of the Old and New Testaments, of the Jewish and Christian churches, involves a serious weakening of our grasp of Revelation as a whole, and of our sense of its grand historic reality as enshrined, first, in the very being of the Jewish Race and of the Catholic Church, and, secondly, in the Literature, inspired or other, of both. It must leave it, as a whole, in our view of it, nothing but a tangled mass of confused and unintelligible details, a puzzle wholly insoluble and arbitrary, a riddle to which we have no clue, painfully, nay vitally, interesting as it is to the true patriot and the generous humanitarian, amid the growing difficulties, social, industrial, political, of the older nations; not to speak of the deeper but connected evils which

Augustine thus expressed the actual truth in the case: "In the Old Testament the New is enclosed; in the New the Old is disclosed."<sup>13</sup> The VIIth of the "Articles of Religion" states it thus: "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man." Nothing is more remarkable than this diversity, as to form, and this unity, as to Person, of the two dispensations—"the Old Testament," as Professor Leathes says, "containing the germ and nucleus of the New, the New containing the realization and fulfilment of the Old, not as a matter of contrivance, but as a matter of broad and patent history, so that the two parts correspond like a cloven tally."

"The Word," says St. John, "was made flesh, and *tabernacled* among us." The signs of His august presence and power still abide. "Old things are

the march, however magnificent, of a material civilization, and the advancement, however striking, of science, theoretical or applied, can do nothing to cure or remove, and, for the masses of mankind, but little to relieve or to compensate. Judaism was a forward-looking Religion; and so, essentially so, is Christianity its perfected development. It, and it alone, has the hopes of the future in its bosom, the key of the future in its hand." Medd, *lb.* pp. 42, 43.

<sup>13</sup> In Vetere Testamento Novum latet, in Novo Testamento Vetus patet.

passed away; all things are become new." He is the Head of the new creation; the world's fresh start; humanity's new Pulse; its Prophet, Priest and King. The convergent point of all the lines of dim and distant prophecy, His Advent was as well the point whence started out all the forces of the world's new life. The End, then, of the old order, He was no less the Beginning of the new future. That was a happy thought of Dionysius, the Little, which made that stupendous event the date of the world's new era. We write intelligently and correctly, A. D., *anno Domini*, not dreamily, A. M., *anno mundi*. The usage is full of profound significance. In a just though silent way, it ascribes to Christian ideas and institutions the wonderful progress of humanity since. Whatever, in this modern world, is beneficent and good in government, in art, in literature, in general culture, in morals, in social science, in humane enterprises suitable to all sorts and degrees of affliction, strikes its root in Bethlehem soil. Christ is the centre and soul of all history. Apart from Him it is without adequate Cause and Solution.

Furthermore, Christ is the Principle and End of universal Redemption.

Whom Holy Scripture thus foreshowed, in Him *personally* centred the whole power of redemp-

tion in the world, for the world, to the world's end. Of main importance here is Christ Himself, not His words, not His miraculous deeds, and still less elaborate schemes of doctrine about Him, mere human framework. Theories simply make the philosophy of the atonement. The constitution of Christ's person and the facts of His life make the atonement as such.

In Him redemption takes on a truly historic form. It is the power of His own sublime and spotless life, in the way of actual conflict with and triumph over sin, touching our nature with atoning virtue at every point, from the depths of the Virgin's womb, to the death on the cross, and through His resurrection in His own full glorification and official session at the right hand of the Father, the last results of the whole gracious process. The Gospel is redemptive fact, not philosophy. It is only apprehended in its own proper sense and scope as it is seen to be a work of grace linked to the Divine-human person of Christ, starting in His birth, running through all His history, coming to its consummation and crown in the glory of His Ascension—one grand, continuous work. So the ancient Creeds put it. And herein, too, lies the advantage of the Christian Year wherever it obtains in great festivals regularly recurring, holding the thought and faith

of worshippers to this Personal and historic sense of the Gospel.

It follows that Christ is as well the Principle and End of the kingdom of glory.

With what profound significance, an apostolic writer terms Him, "The Power of an endless life" (Heb. vii. 16); not simply as revealing it, but actually bringing it to pass"—abolishing death, and bringing life and immortality to light *through the Gospel*" (II Tim. i. 10). What depth of meaning in the phrase, "through the Gospel"! The facts of Christ's life are inseparable. The second Advent belongs to the first as the necessary and complementary part of the same Divine movement. His coming again "in glorious Majesty to judge both the quick and the dead" is made to be the last sense and meaning of His original coming in the flesh. The incarnate, crucified, risen, glorified Redeemer is one with Him who at last "cometh with clouds, every eye seeing Him, and they who pierced Him." Nothing is wanting to make the Personal identity complete: the coming Judge once the Virgin-born and the Man of Calvary.

Where the stupendous claim—the Alpha, the Omega—meets us first, the future world is the theme, and that world as circling round Him who has borne our wounded Humanity to the very throne of the Eternal. In Him and by Him, as its glorified Head,

it reaches at last its own "perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in God's eternal and everlasting glory."

In that world of ineffable glory, He is the Centre and Object of perpetual worship. Angelic hosts sing, night and day: "Worthy is the LAMB that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. v. 12). Not the presence of sainted ones, but of Christ Himself constitutes the happiness of the beatific state. Believe stoutly as we may in the full recognition of friends in heaven, not they but our blessed Lord is Himself the Source of joy, its fullest fruition, according to His own profound word:

*"Where I AM, there ye may be also."*

"To Him who loved the souls of men,  
And washed them in His blood,  
To royal honors raised our heads,  
And made us priests to God,—

"To Him let every tongue be praise,  
And every heart be love;  
All grateful honors paid on earth,  
And nobler songs above.

"Thou art the First, and Thou the Last,  
Time centres all in Thee,—  
The mighty Lord, who was, and is,  
And evermore shall be."

III.

Christ The One And Absolute Way.

“Thou art the Way; to Thee alone  
From sin and death we flee;  
And he who would the Father seek,  
Must seek Him, Lord, by Thee.”



### III.

#### Christ The One And Absolute Way.

*"I AM the Way: no man cometh unto the Father, but by ME."*  
—ST. JOHN XIV. 6.

*"Behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven."*—GEN. XXVIII. 12.

*"Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."*—ST. JOHN I. 51.

HIGHWAYS are for general convenience. Besides, they are a commercial necessity. They form the broad avenues of trade and travel. The glory of old Rome was its magnificent roads, straight as an arrow, paved with blocks of stone, crossing valleys upon grand arches, and stretching out in all directions like radii from a common centre. They were the bonds, the chains of gold which linked it to the outlying world. They made its wealth and its power.

Originally constructed for military purposes, other things besides invincible legions passed to and fro. The world's trade swept along them; and far-off lands poured in the rich products of soil and mines. Merchants from all countries with luxuries and wares, for

a most luxurious people, went in and out by them. Roman civilization, language, literature, laws, life, thought went out, far and wide, by these broad channels. They made the presence and power of Rome a reality in every part of the empire. Constructed at an immense cost, they were substantial ways. Solidity of structure was combined with utility and beauty. Bridges and aqueducts were of finest art and solid masonry. Remains which have survived the decay of ages and the ravages of barbarous hordes give wondrous proof of this.

Local distance spanned by an ample way stands, in the mind of our Lord, for a profounder reality. A vast moral distance separates the human from the heavenly world. The unison of the original creation withstood not the shock of the first temptation. Heaven and earth went asunder. Falling into sin, man fell far from his God and Father.

The deepest problem of the soul, lost to God and its happiness, is, Whence the way of return to His favor and His eternal presence? How at last may "an entrance be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter i. 11)? Christ makes the bold, unequivocal, and unique declaration of *being* Himself the one and absolute Way to the Father; the one and absolute Way to heaven, whence He

came and whither He has now gone "to prepare a place for us."

But how are we to take His word? Not in the adjective sense of mere quality. Augustine's suggestion *vera via vite*—the *true* way of life—simply defining the way, is clearly an error. Making *truth* identical with *true*, and fusing the three ideas into one, the great Latin theologian comes short of the personal distinctness of each in which the claim was originally made and meant. Surely its depth of meaning is not exhausted by such a confusion of thought. The august Speaker claims to be more than the ideal and pattern man—a law of life simply to others; only showing others how they should live, by Himself living our life aright in the midst of alike temptations and trials besetting us. He is, indeed, our example, without blemish and fault; and in every way it is for human reproduction and copy. Truth, however, as will presently appear, stands here for no merely abstract quality, but is a concrete and eternal Reality. And so Way. Personally, Christ says, and says it by virtue of his divine-human character, I AM the Way of God's grace to man, and man's help to God. Thus a later writer put it: "The New and Living Way, consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His *flesh*" (Heb. x. 20).

Just as little is His word to be taken in a purely

figurative sense. It is not metonymically said. Back of the similitude there is an answering reality; back of the shadow a Substantial Form. They empty this Divine word of its deep purport and purpose who reduce it to a simple metaphor. In this way, thousands miss its inner and deeper meaning. Because the *literal* sense is untenable, the *ideal* or *representative* is the only other thought of, forgetting altogether that there must be a *real* sense in which figures do hold good. A sad thing it is to say, but, alas, too true, that the current phrase, "that is figurative," is for ever emptying Holy Scripture of its very substance, making it shadowy and unreal, as if it had, albeit God's word, only to do with similitudes, resemblances, and not stupendous verities and facts; as if, in this very instance, the blessed Lord had only meant to say, that He is *as* a way to our lost race, instead of *being* the Way, as He so explicitly claims.

Nor is it to be taken in a purely declarative sense: "I *show* the way," "I *point* out the course," as a lawgiver laying down the law, as a prophet giving wise instruction, as a philosopher formulating a code of ethics. Just as little can we take "Way" in the sense of instruction<sup>1</sup> simply, as of example; no more than a Voice in the trackless wilderness.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Diman, late Professor in Brown University, in *Oration, Essays, and Sermons*, uses "Way" as the synonym for

Christ is no mere *finger-board* on life's highway. The Holy Spirit is the leader and guide into necessary truth, according to His own word: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth" (St. John xvi. 13; xiv. 26). Our hymnology confesses the same.

"Come, gracious Spirit, heavenly Dove,  
With light and comfort from above;  
Be Thou our Guardian, Thou our Guide,  
O'er every thought and step preside."

The ordinary way-marks serve a good end. They define the way, so that "the wayfaring man need not err therein." They give the traveller the information he would have. They keep him *in* the way; but in no sense *are* they the way. "A man can at most show the way to others; he can never *be* the way."

Man is in ignorance and error, needing self-knowledge of conduct, and says, "When our Lord calls Himself the Way, it is not His meaning that *He has opened a way* for us, but that the course of conduct which His life exemplified is to be the example and pattern of our lives." That precisely is His own deep meaning, as the learned Professor himself, struggling into a profounder view, thus proceeds to show a few sentences further on. "We commit a more fatal mistake when we suffer ourselves to regard Christ as *merely* an example; when we suppose for a moment that by any outward imitation, however painfully exact, we can come to be truly like Him; when we view Him as set in the ever receding frame-work of a past age, like an antique marble, with no inner and vital relation between Him and us. . . . Christ is, indeed, our perfect pattern; but, oh, the disastrous mistake of accepting Him as *simply* that" (p. 315).

edge and knowledge of divine relations. But it is a poor, faulty, conception of Christ's person and mission that goes not beyond the matter of a "School-master" for him unto God. In any such purely pedagogic and tuitional view, we are far from touching the deepest necessities of the case. He was not the founder of a new philosophy, the leader of the Christian school of thought, but the Head of a new humanity (*ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ*, Eph. i. 10); the whole power of God's saving grace in the Personal comprehension of all mankind (St. John i. 17).

For man is under the power of sin; and needs, besides mental and moral culture, heaven's interposing mercy, and delivering act. Sin is a terrific fact in the human world, and not simply an idle fancy; the soul's intolerable burden, and not merely a sort of horrid nightmare from which a sense of relief comes with the morning light. Its action is centrifugal—drives away from God, our being's true and right centre. Shame and guilt are its direct sequence. There follows the painful sense of estrangement from God and vast moral distance. With the first sin came the abortive effort in shame at self-concealment (Gen. iii. 8). Impurity slinks away abashed before spotless Purity. "Guilt and sin separate the soul from God as the widest wastes of un-

travelled space could never separate." Within the human breast there is what Luthardt so aptly styles, "the memory of a lost home. We feel like exiles, longing for the native land from which they have been driven; a craving for a better future, a home-sickness for a lost home, everywhere accompanies us."<sup>2</sup>

The sense of sin is universal. Self-consciousness is everywhere sin-consciousness. It is woven into every tissue and fibre of our being. It is not to be ascribed, then, to the influence of Christian thought and teaching. To this suggestion Wordsworth replies, not more strongly than the facts in the case warrant, "It would be but a shallow supposition that Christianity had invented the idea of sin in order to commend the remedy for it offered by our Saviour. It has indeed profoundly deepened and widely enlarged the consciousness of sin, but the recognition of the fact of human wrong-doing is perfectly independent of Christian teaching."<sup>3</sup>

In fact, the problem of evil is as old as human thought. It formed the dark background of ancient religions, suggestive either of remedial schemes, or hopeless despair. Ancient philosophy, in the conflict of dual principles, co-eternal and co-equal, Good and Evil—Ormazd and Alhriman—shows the

<sup>2</sup> *Saving Truths*, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> *The One Religion*, Bampton Lectures, 1881, p. 149.

speculative mind early grappling with this insoluble mystery. That numberless treatises, earlier and later, have been written on the origin and existence of evil is profoundly significant. More than all else it shows that sin is a fact of our moral nature not to be ignored, neither laughed down nor reasoned down, nor dashed aside as a man would unsightly cobwebs. Overhanging the human soul like a dark thunder-cloud charged with fierce lightnings, men have never ceased to think about it, write about it, talk about it, feel about it.

Older far than Christianity was this problem of human misery. "Let no man," said Buddha, "think lightly of evil, saying in his heart, It will not come nigh unto me. Even by the falling of water-drops a water-pot is filled: the fool becomes full of evil, even if he gather it little by little." In his view, misery was of the very essence of existence, and not a mere taint: so inevitably and hopelessly miserable that he saw no cure save Nirvana, escape from actual being—not death in its ordinary sense, but complete self-extinction, utter and absolute annihilation. At the basis of that old-world religion, which to-day dominates the thoughts and lives of more than one third of the race,<sup>4</sup> lay this stubborn problem—the

<sup>4</sup> Various estimates of the number of Buddhists have been made. Prof. Max Müller says 450,000,000. *Chips from a German Workshop*; says the Rev. Dr. Caird, 500,000,000, *The Faiths of the World*.



existence of evil and escape from it. And yet Buddhism, making common cause with our common woe, antedated Christianity by wellnigh six centuries.

An open secret is the deep undertone of melancholy pervading all classic literature. Notwithstanding the outward splendor of Grecian and Roman life, the best poetry of these nations is full of bitter lamentations over the miseries of mankind. At one and the same time, man is seen to be the most wonderful, and yet the most miserable of creatures. Homer, the light-hearted poet of Greece, wrote:

“Than man more wretched nought, I ween, is found  
Of all that breathes the air and walks the ground.”

Sophocles exclaimed: “Happiest never to have been born! yet it is certainly the next best thing for the living quickly to return to the place whence he came.”<sup>5</sup>

And what is most remarkable, the classic writers,

<sup>5</sup> *Æt. Col.* 1225. How much like the words of the earlier Job!

“Let the day perish wherein I was born,  
And the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived,  
Let that day be darkness;  
Let not God regard it from above,  
Neither let the light shine upon it.  
Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it;  
Let a cloud dwell upon it;  
Let the blackness of the day terrify it.  
As for that night, let darkness seize upon it;  
Let it not be joined unto the days of the year,  
Let it not come into the number of the months.  
Lo, let that night be solitary,  
Let no joyful voice come therein.”

while thus bewailing the misery of man, showed themselves true to our deepest moral intuitions in tracing it all to its one bitter root in man himself. The greatest of the Greek poets affirmed: "It is common to all men to err." Horace wrote: "No one is born without faults." Right in point is Ovid's familiar confession: "I see and approve better things, I follow the worse."<sup>6</sup> The Latin poet and the Christian apostle lived too far apart for either to have borrowed the sentiment from the other. As Ovid before him, so St. Paul, out of his own bitter life-struggle, wrote: "For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Rom. vii. 19). Whether then Gentile or Jewish nature, it is all the same. The thought of each is pitched in the minor key. St. Paul's lament, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. vii. 22, 23), finds its parallel in Ovid's full and frank utterance, "We are always striving for things forbidden, and coveting those denied us."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ἀνθρώποισι γὰρ τοῖς πᾶσι κοινόν ἐστὶ τοῦ ἁμαρτάνειν, *Soph. Antig.* 1024; Vitiis nemo sine nascitur, *Hor. Sat.* I. iii. 68;

Video meliora proboque,

Deteriora sequor. Ovid, *Met.* vii. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata.

"When the great dramatists," says Luthardt, "whether heathen or Christian, place before us a picture of the intricacy of human destiny, it is ever *guilt* which ties the knots. A guiltless hero would be no hero for a drama."<sup>8</sup> "Nor," says a recent English writer, "has the conviction of personal demerit, of falling short of an ideal, of non-observance of a perfect Law, in one word, of Sin, vanished from the midst of the cultivated nations of the present day, like the phantom of a troubled dream."<sup>9</sup>

True to this native sense of sin, only far more intensified in the great English dramatist than it ever was in the Grecian, Shakespeare makes the writhing Macbeth exclaim:

"Better be with the dead,  
Than on the torture of the mind to lie  
In restless ecstasy."

And how well the present Poet Laureate has said, that in wronging a friend, a man

"Wrongs himself more, and ever bears about  
A silent court of justice in his breast,  
Himself the judge and jury, and himself  
The prisoner at the bar, ever condemned:  
And that drags down his life."

Long centuries before, the Latin satirist, with the bitter sting of truth, had written:

<sup>8</sup> *Saving Truths*, p. 63.

<sup>9</sup> Maclear, *The Evidential Value of the Holy Eucharist*, p. 28.

“Trust me, no tortures which the poets feign,  
 Can match the fierce, unutterable pain  
 He feels who, night and day, devoid of rest,  
 Carries his own accuser in his breast.”

Thus all literature, ancient and modern, Indian, Classic, and Scriptural, is one in this troubled sense of sin. It is seen to be the most stubborn fact in our moral being; and no subject either for light jest, or flippant ridicule, or easy apology. Long since wrote the Jewish sage, “*Fools make a mock at sin*” (Prov. xiv. 19). Just in this modern philosophy has given no little proof of its consummate folly, seeking, under the veil of delusive theories, to hide the ugliness of sin and shut out all sense of danger, as the silly ostrich by burying its head in the sand would save itself from the shot of the huntsman—cheating men where they can afford to be neither cheated nor confused.

Thus, sin has been counted a *moral necessity*. Creatureship, and imperfection, it is averred, are inseparable, and the perfecting of moral being, we are gravely told, lies along the path of opposition. By counter tendencies man is “to work himself upwards from a Paradise of ignorance and vassalage to a Paradise of knowledge and freedom.”<sup>10</sup> In this

<sup>10</sup> Schiller, *Lectures on Universal History*, quoted by Luthardt, *Saving Truths*, p. 295.

view, sin is a gain to man, not a loss; a help, not a hindrance and drawback in the great matter of moral development, wings to his true being, not a weight and clog. Poets have lent their genius to popularize this Hegelian thought: evil, such only in the narrow judgment of man, but in reality the measure and medium of good.

“God never fails in an experiment,  
Nor tries an experiment upon a race  
But to educe its highest style of life,  
And sublimate its issues. Thus to me  
Evil is not a mystery, but a means  
Selected from the infinite resources  
To make the most of me.”<sup>11</sup>

This ready apology—evil the ladder whereby men climb to moral heights yet unattained—whether met in philosophy, or poetry, or popular literature, is to be condemned in an out and out way. How it flies right in the face of the old distinction between good and evil, calling “evil good” in spite of the divine anathema (Is. v. 20), and making it man’s best friend, and not what, in bitter reality, it is, his worst foe! How it flies in the face of human experience everywhere and always! Sin is not the rough path to good, but its frightful overthrow; not the elevation, but degradation of man. In fact, how it sinks him

<sup>11</sup> Holland, *Bitter Sweet*.

to the low level of brutish natures, making him "earthly, sensual, devilish." To defend it, or extenuate and excuse it under the plea of moral necessity, is to put into unresisted operation the vile forces which everywhere are seen to be dragging down the nobility and selfhood of man.

Against this widely prevalent theory, a recent writer uses this vigorous language, "We see how the Fall of man, which some thinkers have almost divinized as the first giant step of progress, so far from contributing to our civilization, deadens and weakens the whole after-life of the race. Who has not felt the depressing devilish influence of an atmosphere of sin; the taint contracted from a bad man, or a bad book; the unspeakable, hideous fascination of a wicked thought? Contrast this broken, ruined condition of single persons, and of the race, with the design of God's love for its perfection, and, then, if you can, associate it with progress."<sup>12</sup>

Equally objectionable is this other apologetic word: "Man was made complete as the plant or the animal was." This view makes sin a mere negation, as darkness in relation to light. It takes away its positive element of wilful action. Sin is only a weakness of nature, an error of judgment, a mistake, and

<sup>12</sup> Wordsworth, *The One Religion*, Bampton Lectures, 1881, p. 194.

misdirection to be corrected and outgrown as a man has outgrown and left behind the feebleness and follies of his youth. This is the bane of much of the so styled modern thought: evolution doing for the moral man what is boastfully claimed for it in the sphere of physical nature.

Man is the child of God, the *fallen* child indeed, but still bearing the Father's likeness. Not an animal simply; nor a being endowed simply with intellectual powers; but highest of all, a moral being, and in this likeliest unto God, that he knows good from evil. But he is no weakling here. The power of choice is his—hating evil and doing good, or hating good and doing evil. The grandest attribute and gravest danger of man is his free agency—the perfect freedom of his will in action. This makes his glory or his shame. This stamps every action, the least as the greatest with an inseparable moral quality. Entire freedom is the essential element of his existence, and moral duty its direct sequence. But duty makes not its own rule of life. Instead, it finds its highest expression in the will and law of Him in whom his whole being stands.

Sin, then, is the wilful breaking away from this right rule: the principle of pure individualism over against the Divine mind and will—the Prodigal Son taking the ordering of his life into his own hands, and

making his "journey into a *far country*" (St. Luke xv. 13). The root of sin is selfishness. It is, then, not mere misdirection, nor misjudgment, nor weakness of nature simply, but downright perversity—wilfulness. Back of it there is an impelling or consenting will; and, standing in more or less deliberation and purpose, it is not without personal disquietude—the sense of utter unworthiness of aught from God save just displeasure. And as to its ultimate issue, inspired pen has written this down, "Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (II Thess. i. 9).

Nothing then so much out of place here as mild extenuation or profane jest. Sin is a most serious affair; not a mere fault to be lightly passed over, nor a slip to be easily condoned. Its very essence is self-will: a nature, in its deepest powers, torn away from its true centre and orbit—a life out of harmony with God and at war with itself. So far from any such words of extenuation or apology being in place, this, in fact, we do know, that our recovery from it called for a merciful atonement proceeding from the eternal Centre of our being. A true poet has thus expressed this "infinite distance between the guilt-laden sinner and the infinitely holy Creator," and all impossibility of access by human effort alone.



"Heaven and earth stood apart, the scars remaining,  
 Like cliffs that had been rent asunder;  
 A dreary sea now rolls between:  
 Though neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,  
 Can wholly do away, I ween,  
 The marks of that which once hath been." <sup>13</sup>

Broad hints of the felt necessity of interceding interest come out in the general sense of mankind from the earliest period. In the mind of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the first altar-fire ever kindled, the first blood shed by fratricidal hand spoke of a better Sacrifice "than that of Abel." That altar which St. Paul found at Athens, inscribed to the Unknown God, was a witness, in fact, to the heathen world's own sense of estrangement from God, stretching out its withered arms into the darkness, vainly imploring acceptance through some dim propitiation. The old world sought to heal the breach by confession of sin, by lustral waters, by penitential deprecations.

<sup>13</sup> "Sin creates a gulf between the creature and God. . . . The threat was, *In the day that thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die.* It was fulfilled. The essence of death is separation from God, in whom alone is life. That result began to show itself instantly. The working out of the sentence in its full effects, in body and mind, in heart and affections, in soul and spirit, was only a question of time. All is summed up in the first utterance of fallen man, *I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.* Fear, shame, estrangement had already taken the place of filial confidence and love." Medd, *The One Mediator*, p. 142.

tions, by the well nigh universal practice of bloody sacrifices, reaching their deepest significance and worth in the offering of what was of highest value—the life of man for the sin of man. Thus, by the best and dearest substitute, nearest and likest to himself, expiation was attempted for the guilt of his soul.

How fertile was the Mediæval world in harsh expedients to rid the conscience of this burden of guilt! Taking the passage in a purely literal sense: “The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (St. Matt. xi. 12), the severest measures found multitudes even eager to try their virtue. Painful penances, ascetic austerities, bodily tortures, hair-cloth garments next the skin, flagellations until the naked body was covered with gore, the bed of briars, the bare apartments and hard fare of praying monks, the stone floor, the hard couch, the late vigil—common methods these, but vainest recourse to rid the soul of its sense of guilt.

Certainly human thought has grappled with no graver problem than this sense of sin. Can the mighty barrier be removed? Can the “dreary sea” be spanned? Can the severed continents be linked together by any available Highway—God’s far-off home of eternal purity and sinful man’s dwelling-place? Whence Projector and Builder? Who at

all competent to the bold task? Man? No! And yet somehow man must share in the work. Man must be the medium of man's salvation. Through human channel must flow the helpful mercy of almighty God. The nature which sinned, the nature to be saved from sin must somehow be joined to the Power alone able to save.

What, in the world's gray dawn, was but a vision to the sleeping Patriarch on the plains of Syria, long afterward in the mystery of the Incarnation became a stupendous and abiding reality. Doubtless, the primary purpose of that mystic ladder, on which heavenly messengers were seen ascending and descending, was to assure that lone traveller in the wilderness of God's continuous presence and His ever-watchful providence. But reading between the lines by the help of Christ Himself, it had, we learn, a deeper meaning—this, that the two great continents torn asunder by the sin of man are re-united by the love of God in the gift of His Son. Its direct application to Himself is an open secret: *the* Ladder linking together heaven and earth, by Whom God's saving grace has actually descended to sinful man, and by whose help man mounts up to God.

The ladder Jacob saw was set up on the earth, while its top rested on the skies, the Lord standing there, and sending down all its length this Almighty

word, "I AM the Lord God." Glorious type this of the great mystery of godliness—the twofoldness of nature which of necessity entered into the constitution of Christ's person! The mighty movement of God's grace appears in true human form, stands in human relations, meets human temptations and trials, and yet surmounts sin and death, not surmounted by them.

Had the ladder been wanting in either element—its earthly basis or its heavenly contact—it should have failed in its deepest significance: the absolute necessity of some Substantial method mediating God's mercy and man's need. "The baseless fabric of a vision" it should have been, the very mockery of the human soul in its empty show of divine help, but for this heavenly and earthly contact. If the Incarnation of Christ mean anything real in this direction, anything for human need and hope to rest upon, it is that God, then and there, joined in mysterious but harmonious union Divinity and humanity for the world's actual redemption from the penalty and power of sin. The stupendous Fact remains, though we stagger at the mystery; remains the central point, the very pivot upon which the entire Gospel turns. If the Incarnation lack reality on either side; if Christ be not as truly God as He is truly man, then must this be said: His presence

as a saving Power in the world is gone for man, a sinner needing in a real and substantial way God's help. God's own arm of salvation stretched out.

Then is our Way back to God a Person—a divine-human Person—not any spoken word of God simply, however true and potent, but “*the* Word made flesh, and dwelling among us”; heaven's Prince, yet the Virgin's son: the higher nature laying hold of the lower by a true human birth; making, by a sublime and unique life lived right in the midst of our temptations and sins, yet itself “without sin” at every point, *the* Way for the removal of human sin and guilt; and, by the full glorification of that life in His resurrection and ascension, “opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers.”<sup>14</sup>

A lost world stands in need of delivering acts, not of bare ideas. Sin and misery are not idle fancies, but facts—the most potent, the most terrific facts in the common life of the world. If ever done away with, it must be by a redemptive Life meeting all the necessities of the case, and not by truth in any

<sup>14</sup> Canon Medd writes, “Only a Mediator, a Priest, can bring the creature back again to God even when it wills to be brought; or can make atonement and satisfaction on its behalf for the injury and wrong done to the Majesty of the Supreme Lawgiver by an act of disobedience. There is a new need, that of expiation; and there is a greater and to us more evident need of a Mediator.” *The One Mediator*, p. 69.

abstract way. The power of redemption is lodged not in theories of the atonement, nor in theologies, nor in doctrinal systems, nor in confessions, nor in creeds, nor in sermons, nor even in the Bible as such. These all are but finger-boards. One is our Saviour, even Christ. It seems strange to have to say this, yet the current conception of Christianity which reduces it to a purely pedagogic arrangement makes it quite necessary to say it. Should you wipe out Holy Scripture as a boy a sum from his slate, you would not in the slightest degree affect the personal substance and power of salvation back of it. And that ministry, and that preaching serves Christ best of all which trumpet-tongued, like a John Baptist, rings out the plain, unequivocal direction: "Behold *the* Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."

"The Founder of Christianity," says an English writer of great power, "distinctly declares that He is Himself the originator of a covenant between God and man: 'This cup is *the new covenant* in my blood' (St. Luke xxii. 20). This is far more than the simple claim to be prophet or inspired seer. . . The old covenant had its historical birth in the days of Moses; but Moses never claimed to be its origin or ground or cause. His commands were issued under the formula, 'Thus saith the Lord'; he never said, 'Do this in remem-

brance of Me.' The claim of the Christian Founder is unique, whatever view men may choose to take of His person. He declares Himself to be the new life of the world, or, which is the same thing, the life of a new world; the pouring out of His blood is to initiate a second covenant between God and man, to alter the relation between the human and the Divine. . . . To the mind of St. Paul, as to the mind of modern Christendom, there was present that picture which is unique in the world's history—the portrait of a Man belonging to a race of all others the most impressed with the consciousness of human depravity, and standing Himself in that immediate presence of death which is wont to lay bare the secrets of all souls; yet, in the very midst of His race, and in the very presence of death, declaring Himself, by a life of unblemished sinlessness, to have *bridged the chasm* between the human and the Divine."<sup>15</sup>

"In my Father's house are many mansions." No image of the "Saints' Everlasting Rest" is comparable to this employed by the Master Himself—its reality, its spaciousness, its abiding joys, its sacred Presence and Centre of delight. A *home*, the place where a man's happiest hours are given him; a *heavenly home*,

<sup>15</sup> *The Historical Christ of St. Paul*, by George Matheson, D.D., Expositor, Vol. I., Second Series, pp. 441, 443.

all earth's sorrows and sins left behind, its tears wiped away; "its smiles without alloy"; the FATHER's house, the home, therefore, of purest companionship, where the pure only may enter (Rev. xxi. 27).

In the sin which stains heart and life; in the guilt which defiles the soul and disturbs the conscience, how may mortal-born hope to enter there? Spiritual fitness is not by man's independent powers and efforts. Man's Way back to God is solely by God's Way to man. "How can we know the way?" was the inquiry of the perplexed Thomas. The direct Personal answer was: "I," Bethlehem's Incarnate Wonder, Calvary's Sinless Victim, Easter's Glorious Victor, Olivet's Returning Lord: "I AM the Way."

"Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find;  
The holy, just and sacred Three  
Are terrors to my mind.

"But if Immanuel's face appear  
My hope, my joy begins;  
His name forbids my slavish fear,  
His grace removes my sin."



#### IV.

Truth, God's Self-Revelation.

“Thou art the Truth. Thy word alone  
True wisdom can impart;  
Thou only canst inform the mind,  
And purify the heart.”

#### IV.

### Truth, God's Self-Revelation.

*"Jesus saith, I AM the Truth: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."*—ST. JOHN XIV. 6.

NOT truthful simply, a mere abstract quality; but absolute Truth, its eternal source and substance, its Divine reality, its widest scope and last sense. We say of God, not simply He is pure, but purity; not simply holy, but holiness; purity and holiness in original, independent, and underived possession and perfection.

On the part of this august Speaker there would have been nothing unique and pre-eminent in a claim of mere truthfulness. This is not to be thus singled out as such an exceptional thing among men. Any suspicion of a general lack in this regard would be taken as an unjust and unwarrantable reflection on mankind. Every man esteems it a noble trait personal to himself, the essential element of his char-

acter and his intercourse with others; and, properly enough, would resent even a bare hint to the contrary. A man says this of himself: "I *speaking* the truth." And doubtless, it is the highest and nobles' thing he can say of himself. It would not, then have been anything remarkable, apart altogether from the ordinary estimate men put on their word, for Christ to have said no more than this of Himself. Are all men liars? More than than simply *speaking* the truth He claims for Himself—this, that no man indeed could pretend to, *being* the truth.

Of many beautiful and saintly lives on earth, it might be said "full of charity," "full of purity," "full of zeal," but never, even of the saintliest, could this be said, "not virtuous but Virtue, not truthful but truth," dropping altogether the adjective of mere quality and substituting the concrete noun of personal identity. On Christ's lips, this claim goes far beyond the simple utterance of truth invariably and always; means a great deal more than we are wont to say of some one we know through and through—he is a man of truth.

Nor is this majestic claim to be taken as one and the same with official integrity: the gift of inspiration as it actually came to special men in the olden times, or the bare pretense of papal infallibility,

the astounding assumption of this later age. Vehicles of truth the prophets of old were when, "as moved by the Holy Ghost, they made known to the world the deep things of God." And this, in a lower and more general sense, the master minds of mankind also are—leaders of thought, teachers of men—themselves coming to a knowledge of the truth to impart it to others. As philosophers, thinkers, instructors they serve us in what must ever be esteemed our highest interest, our noblest pursuit—the search after truth.

Discovery is their vocation and office. "Experimental Philosophy" is the name they themselves not inaptly give to the whole process; for theirs are but human excursions, more or less satisfactory, into the broad domain of truth. The highest thing these masters of the world of thought may claim to be is but a *voice* out of the great profound; a John Baptist *witnessing* to the truth, in their only partial and fragmentary way, not pretending to the whole truth, much less *being* the truth. They and truth are in no sense identical. Such vanity never entered the brain of philosopher, or holy prophet. No man, neither Socrates, nor Plato, nor Pythagoras, nor yet Moses, "the man of God," nor the lofty Isaiah, nor the vehement Ezekiel, nor any in that long line of illustrious seers, ever dared or dreamed of say-

ing of himself this great, this astounding thing: "I AM the truth." Speakers of God's truth,—that made all the dignity and grandeur of their office, and not Truth in its infinity personalized. They and Truth were not one.

It was left to another and greater than the prophets of the old, or philosophers of the modern, world to claim personal identity with truth; nor this as merely exalting and emphasizing His prophetic gifts and office, but in a way quite distinct and apart from these. For, let it be observed, it is not "I declare the truth," "I show the truth." Christ does not thus let Himself down to the low plane of prophet, or philosopher, or pedagogue, or head of a school, or master of an academy. Beyond everything of this sort, it is oneness of being with the original and underived Source of truth. In vain one searches the ancient Scriptures for self-assertion on the part of any of its writers comparable to this. "The old prophets," it has been forcibly said, "shrank into nothingness before God—concealed themselves behind the glory of His name and the import of His message. They spake *of* Him and *for* Him, each seeking to secure attention, not by proclaiming, 'I say unto you,' but by the humbler and more becoming announcement, 'Thus saith the Lord.'" But, "Never man spake like *this* man." In the whole

range of literature there is nothing like His proclamation: "I AM the Truth."

And, be it observed, it is not *truths*, but truth in its generic Comprehension and living Root. No mere summary of naked theological propositions and doctrinal statements, however true in themselves, can satisfy the profoundly *personal* sense of this claim. Truth is not a thing of mere words—a string of formulas, as the long established principles of law. To think of it as nothing more than a statutory arrangement; to confound it with articles of religion, as such, with systems of theology, confessions of faith, even with the naked word of the Bible bound by private interpretation, is a dreary mistake. Such human apprehensions of the truth are mixed, more or less, with the clay of our nature, just as water shows, by color or taste, the properties of the soil through which it percolates.

Back of all summaries of the faith, back of apostles and prophets, back of the writers of Holy Scriptures, earlier and later, there must be the LIFE of truth—its eternal Reality and Root. Life is action. Its law is progress, historic movement, the revelation of purpose, character. Deeds are the things here, not mere words. Actions lie deeper than words; they spring from the hidden depths of a man's being. His life is the best exponent of his character.

“We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives  
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.”

The highest Truth is the action of the Highest—the All-loving heart showing to the erring child its eternal favor. In the necessities of the case, Revelation expresses itself in redemptive act. Revelation and redemption are, thus, one in their deepest sense, and last purpose. The Personal Word is the fullest exponent of the Divine character. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father” (St. John i. 14). Revelation—highest truth in grandest action—is here seen taking on truly historic form and order, sweeping onward from the first bare glimmer of light in the place where man sinned and fell to its full-orbed splendor in Jesus Christ, “the everlasting Son of the Father.”

“God is love,” says St. John; “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” God is truth. Truth is eternal as God is.

“The eternal years of God are hers.”

Like “Almighty God, the Fountain of all wisdom,” it is “even from everlasting.” Of the wonders of the



universe an inspired poet wrote: "In wisdom hast Thou made them all." Another exclaims: "His understanding is infinite." Still another sacred writer names Him, "the only wise God"; and breaks forth in this sublime rhapsody; "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Wisdom is of the essence of God; in Him as water in its spring-head. "He that teacheth a man knowledge, shall not he know?" In this pertinent question, the Psalmist rightly judged that knowledge in us pre-supposed, ay, necessitated knowledge in Him, in boundless degree. Even Cicero came this far. "Man is wise, and so therefore is God"—every excellency holding in the inferior nature but the shadow and reflection of a deeper corresponding Reality in the superior Being.

"Light of Light." Of the very essence of God, truth is from above, downward; not from below, upward; not a discovery on man's part, but a movement from its Eternal Centre, a Divine revelation by word, and act, and, last of all, in Person. Profoundly significant is the very earliest representation of such communications: God *walking* on earth and *talking* familiarly with men (Gen. iii. 5)—heaven's voice falling on human ears. Anthropomorphism though it be, yet prophecy it was of what distantly and ultimately came to actual fulfilment in the mystery of

the Incarnation. *The Truth* is God personalized in His Son. "I and the Father are one" (St. John x. 30).

Not the necessity, but *form* of the revelation is the point of special interest. To answer at all its own end, it must contemplate our moral, and not our mental condition, either exclusively or mainly. Sin is the deepest fact of our nature. This fact of mortal facts prescribed its only proper and adequate form. Sin brought darkness and death; the revelation must bring light and life. In its fullest scope and purpose, the revelation must be a *redemption*: a stupendous Act of deliverance, and not a mere word of wisdom for human guidance. And the Gospel of God's grace is seen taking on the shape, not of the highest conceivable philosophy, but the glorious record of a Life pure and perfect. Says a noble writer, "If God and fallen man are to be brought together in any such union of life as the idea of religion requires, it is plain that it must be through a new movement on the part of God towards man, whereby He shall be found breaking down the wall of partition which sin has raised between man and Himself, so as to make room for this inward conjunction in a real and not merely imaginary way."

This inlying need, then, of something more than an abstract Divine word simply, a redemptive Act in

fact, serves at once to explain the *personal* character which the soul's cry to God took on through all the anterior ages. Isaiah thus gives it voice: "Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence." Humanity's deep yearning takes this more definite shape in Solomon's dedicatory prayer at the opening of the great temple: "But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?" The heavens *do* bow. As never before, God *does* in very deed tabernacle with men. Divinity enshrines itself in humanity. "God is manifest in the flesh." "The Truth, in its absolute substance, stands revealed and accessible to all men, in the incarnate Word." Of Himself Christ says: "I am from *above*"; "I came forth from the FATHER"; "I came down from *heaven*." And John Baptist makes this proclamation: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, *He hath declared Him*" (St. John i. 18).

Under the Personal form here brought to view, the revelation was and could have been no abrupt and unheralded event. Only in accord with classic fancy and fable is it that *its* goddess of wisdom sprung full-grown from the head of the supreme divinity. But such abruptness falls not in with the facts of universal nature and history.

Every movement implies beginning, progress, and consummation. Progress makes history. Nature has its history. The silent testimony of the rocks introduces us to a world not complete at once. There is evidence here of vast creative epochs, taking up indefinite, indeterminable periods. And if in the light of geological facts, the grand and stately step-pings of nature's God are seen to take on a progressive order so marked and vast, I am sure that we are only likely to come to any proper sense of what claims to be the revelation of God in the sphere of human life and history, when contemplating it under a like view—a Divine movement. As such it comes, of course, under the law of progress. To the thoughtful mind, making anything like earnest of the matter under consideration, this will satisfactorily account for the long delay of Christ's advent: why Bethlehem's marvellous Birth happened not at the very time and place of man's fall; and why the Cross was not planted at the very gate of Eden.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Since these lectures were written Canon Westcott's fresh book, *The Revelation of the Father*, has left the press, from which I have added a quotation, here and there, in a footnote. "It cannot have been for nothing that God was pleased to disclose His counsels, fragment by fragment, through long intervals of silence and disappointment and disaster. In that slow preparation for the perfect revelation of Himself to men which was most inadequately apprehended till it was finally given, we discern the

It came only "in the fulness of time;" we are told. Not until the sense of humanity's need has touched its lowest depths does personal Relief from God come. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." Redemption has its age-long preparation, and its *history*—no empty word in this connection. It puts revelation before us in its own true and proper character—the actual movement of God in the great scheme of redemption. Says the vigorous thinker above quoted, "It is itself the very process of redemption from the beginning, the progressive movement of the Eternal Word by which He is seen coming always more and more near to men, till at length in the fulness of the time the great first promise of Paradise reached its consummation in that voice from heaven, 'This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' From first to last, revelation and redemption are one; and they become complete in Christ; who by His *appearing* hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."<sup>2</sup>

*pattern* of His ways. . . . A few scattered hints here and there sufficient to witness to the continuity of the Divine purpose but not to display it: promises suited to support faith but not to satisfy it: types intelligible only as they answered to real cravings of the soul: such were the means by which God disciplined His ancient people for the coming Saviour" (pp. 19, 20).

<sup>2</sup> *Revelation and Redemption*, by J. Williamson Nevin, D.D., LL.D. "What is unfolded in the Scriptures is one great economy

Whatever Pilate's temper, whether jest or earnest, no inquiry could well be more serious and important than his, "What is truth?" To its original propounder, it is clear enough that no mere playing with truth, as the shuttle-cork driven hither and thither, "never continuing in one stay"—one man's conclusions swept away by another man's deeper penetration and clearer insight—would give satisfaction. Truth is no such bat and ball affair. It is God's eternal purpose taking actual and adequate form in the incarnate Fact—the stream of Divine mercy flowing into the world's life and coming in Christ to its widest compass and meaning. Hence the answer which He, "the faithful and true Witness" (Rev. iii. 14) Himself makes: "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice."

The Revelation was first by a spoken (Heb. i. 1), followed ages afterward by the Living, Personal, Word (St John i. 1, 14). Originally it took the form of promise and prophecy—a grand, inlying expectation to which the yearning heart fastened itself.

of salvation—*unum continuum systema*, as Bengel puts it—an organism of divine acts and testimonies, which, beginning in Genesis with the creation, advances progressively to its completion in the person and work of Christ, and is to find its close in the new heaven and earth predicted in the Apocalypse; and it is only in connection with this whole that the details can be properly estimated." Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Intro. Lecture, p. 1, revised translation, by George L. Day, D.D.

In the sacred record, as it runs along from age to age, nothing is more evident than the progressive distinctness of what stood out to that waiting world as the Messianic hope. It is the informing spirit of those earlier Scriptures. Hence the Apocalyptist's strong declaration: The spirit of all revelation is the testimony concerning Jesus (Rev. xix. 10).<sup>3</sup> They all pointed to Christ, and, in His coming, came at length to their own self-answering end. So manifestly was this the case, that He bade the cavilling Jews in His own day: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me" (St. John v. 39).

Christ is the end here; but the end of the old order of things only, in the deepest sense, to be their new Beginning. In fact, we come to no just sense of His advent in the world only to think and speak of Him as the historical completion of the Old Testament. We read aright no historic movement if we see in it nothing beyond itself. The full blaze of noon is more a great deal than any auroral beauties

<sup>3</sup> "The Old Testament opens to us the prospect of one purpose variously reflected in writings spread over a thousand years: of one purpose moving onwards with a continuous growth among the barren despotisms of the east: of one purpose fulfilled in an unbroken national life which closed only when its goal was reached." Canon Westcott, *The Revelation of the Father*, p. 149.

never so brilliant. Even as the sunrise is vastly more than the golden streaks of the dawn going before and serving to harbinger and proclaim the coming king of day, so Christ, "the Sun of Righteousness," was immeasurably more than the fulfilment simply of older revelations. While His Advent brought those earlier disclosures of God's mind and will to their one proper end, it carries onward to the millennial glory and on the broadest scale of humanity His scheme of redemptive mercy and grace. All the theophanies and shekinahs of the ancient Scriptures are nothing in comparison with the glory of the later—the in-dwelling of the Divine Logos in the Prophet of Nazareth.

Just at this point we touch the startling ground and compass of this stupendous claim. He does, in fact, proclaim His essential oneness with the eternal Author both of wisdom and mercy. Nothing short is it of the plain, straightforward, unequivocal avowal of actual Divinity. Thus, it goes along with just such other Self-proclamations: "I and the Father are one"; "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

How later Scripture is ever reiterating this, Christ's own sense of His person and work. St. John makes it the sum and substance of the whole Gospel. "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us



an understanding that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, *even* in His Son Jesus Christ." After telling us that "in Christ was hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," St. Paul gives us this epitome of the Gospel: "*God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*" And the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews gives this, as the clear sense of the Old Testament and the New: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son—the Brightness of His glory, the express Image of His Person."

Furthermore, this incarnate Life as well takes on *historic order*. How it is seen stretching through all stages of human life from birth to death, and through the grave to the glory on high, touching each and all alike with its atoning virtue. The Gospel is pre-eminently factual. It stands in the facts of the Incarnation and the Atonement, and not in any philosophies or theories of them. On this historic sense and sweep of redemption, the old Creeds are thoroughly pronounced. They lead us to express our belief in the Incarnation as the actual beginning of the atonement; in His human birth as placing Him, as a condition precedent, in the very order

of our common life; in His sufferings and death, following its sad misfortunes to the one common end; and, then, in His glorious resurrection and ascension, as the crown and finish at last of the whole redemptive process.

This follows, then, that Christ's mission in the world is neither primarily nor purely prophetic and tuitional, but redemptive: reclaiming men from sin and guilt, not simply leading them on by godly example; not a teacher of religion only, but its worshipful object. It is not possible, without fatal prejudice to this gracious end, to place Him on a level simply with the sages of antiquity—a mere teacher of truth and in the same general way. He poses not before the world in the rôle of a philosopher, or theologian, or creed-maker. He is the living power back of creeds, theologies, philosophies—"the Truth."<sup>4</sup> He

<sup>4</sup> "His Person is reflected in His words, the worth of the one explains the worth of the other. His words do not expound a theology—they institute a religion. This is their essential and distinctive characteristic. In the Acts and the Epistles we have a theology: the disciples explain the mission and sayings of their Master, especially in their relation to the mind and will of God, and to the state and destinies of men. But the Gospels simply record the words which reveal the consciousness of Jesus, which help us, as it were, to stand within His spirit and know the Person who created our religion as He knew Himself. And it is because His words stand in this relation to His Person that they are so creative. It is of far greater importance that we know what Jesus thought of Himself than that we know what St. Paul

is not to be named, then, in the same breath with Pythagoras, Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, each the head of a school of philosophy; nor with Confucius, Buddha, Sakya Muni, Mohammed, Zoroaster, each the founder of a religion. The whole significance of the Incarnation suffers irreparable damage from any such association, rather wretched confusion. His is not one among a thousand names, memorable on earth as great leaders of thought, or religious enthusiasts and adventurers; but His the Name at which "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess Him Lord to the glory of God the Father." How well a French writer says, "Reduce Christ to a mere Master like Plato, or a prophet like Isaiah, and it is as if the Gospels were emptied of their meaning; the very substance of the doctrine is gone; there remains only a dry husk, a hollow, resounding shell."<sup>5</sup>

Not to be a leader or helper of men simply, the best this world has ever known, in the tedious search after truth; not to give them right instruction simply as to present duty and their eternal destiny, thought of Him; what the Son knew of the Father is of diviner worth to the world than what the disciples thought concerning Him. Religion precedes theology; every theology runs back into a religion, and every spiritual religion into a creative personality; and so the Person and words of Jesus underlie alike the religion of Christ and the discourses and discussions of His apostles." Fairbairn, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, p. 188.

<sup>5</sup> De Pressensé, *Life and Times of Jesus Christ*, p. 289.

did Christ our Lord come to earth. A single line is all He ever wrote, and that in the sand which the passing footstep was sure to obliterate. Truth, indeed, flashes clearer light on a man's pathway. It does clear the mental vision. However, the wrong in man was not of mind only, but of moral nature. Guilt is to be removed from the soul as well as ignorance. To do this Christ came—to *save* men, not alone teach them. Men are saved neither by sound doctrine, nor wholesome example. A large body of religionists do in this very way affect to make much both of the exceptional life and teachings of Christ. But He does more than point the way to heaven. He is personally the Way. More a great deal than any outward rule of life; He is, in fact, the very Substance of our salvation, its eternal Principle. More a great deal than the best teacher; ay, the truth itself in Divine Reality.

These vigorous words of a learned divine, my teacher in theology, to whom I pay loving and lasting respect,—*venerabile nomen*—are just in point. "Christ does not exhibit Himself accordingly as the medium only, by which the truth is brought nigh to men. He claims always to *be* Himself, all that the idea of salvation claims. He does not simply point men to heaven. He does not merely profess to give right instruction. He does not present to

them only the promise of life, as secure to them from God on certain conditions. But He says, 'I AM the Way, and the TRUTH, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by ME' . . . . Christ is the substance, and not merely the source, of this salvation. So completely, indeed, is this view interwoven with the whole style of thinking in the New Testament, that we often fail, for this very reason, to notice the extent to which it is carried."<sup>6</sup>

This irresistibly follows, the *exclusiveness* of His Saviourhood: "no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me"—not by any saints of the distant past; not by Abraham, though the father of the faithful; not by Moses, though the mighty deliverer of God's chosen people; not by David, though the great king, Israel's sweet singer, and the leader still of worship in the appointed use of the Psalter; not by Isaiah, though the Evangelic seer, and from afar behold-

<sup>6</sup> *The Mystical Presence*, by J. Williamson Nevin, D.D., LL.D., pp. 215, 219. "The salvation of the world stood, first of all, in His own Person. It was there as a real outward constitution, an act of self-revelation on the part of God, set over against the order of nature, the presence of a higher economy brought down into the midst of it from above, and making room within its bosom for all the grace that is comprehended in the idea of the Gospel. 'In Him was life; and the life became the light of men.' He was Himself the Way to the Father, the absolute Truth, the Resurrection, and the Life. It is in this deep sense, originally, that the Gospel is represented to be a 'NEW CREATION.'" Nevin, *Review of Hodge on Ephesians*. Mercersbury Rev., 1857, p. 209.

ing the glad day of the Lord; not by John Baptist, though the prophet of the Highest, the morning-star of the world's fresh glory; not by the goodly fellowship of the prophets, nor the glorious company of the apostles, nor the noble army of martyrs; not by any of the great souls who have ever lived on earth, "and so lived that their names are held in everlasting remembrance"; not by any of God's servants, the faithful departed; but only, He says, who claims to be the Truth, "by Me." Not then one Saviour among many; but the only one.

What emphatic exclusion is this of all the world besides from everything like share in His mediatorial office and glory! Who is He who thus dares to plant Himself between heaven and earth, between God and man?

Jesus saith, "I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, *but by ME.*"

V.

The Living Light of the World.

“The light is ever silent;  
Most silent of all heavenly silences.  
Such let my life be here;  
Not marked by noise but by success alone,  
Not known by bustle but by useful deeds,  
Quiet and gentle, clear and fair as light,  
Yet full of its all penetrating power,  
Its silent but resistless influence;  
Wasting no needless sound, yet ever-working,  
Hour after hour, upon a needy world.”



## V.

### The Living Light of the World.

*"I AM the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."*—ST. JOHN VIII. 12.

THOUGH esteemed a genuine fragment of the original Gospel of St. John, recent Biblical criticism regards the narrative of the adulteress and her self-convicted accusers, beating their hasty retreat, as an interpolation at this point. On this supposition, Christ's identification with Light, in its absolute source and sense, ranking in sublimity and magnitude with the other stupendous I AMs, is thus directly connected with the feast of Tabernacles mentioned in the preceding chapter. That joyous memorial of Israel's tent-life in the desert annually attracted vast crowds to Jerusalem. It was *the* Feast of the Jews. Two incidents had a well understood symbolic character. At the morning sacrifice, water from the fountain of Siloam, borne in procession to the temple, was poured from a golden

pitcher. The libation was intended to recall the marvellous *supply of water* from the Rock during all the desert-wanderings—in some sort the sacramental sign of a Divine sustenance. Putting into this ceremony its higher spiritual meaning, Jesus said “If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink” (vii. 37). He makes it the parable of Himself.

The colloquy here recorded, the evangelist expressly says, took place in the Treasury-hall (viii. 20), so called because containing the chests for the offerings of the people, outside of the temple proper. The more usual name was “the court of the women.” In the centre stood two colossal candelabra with massive branches. These were lighted at the evening sacrifice, brilliantly illuminating the whole city. These lamps had a historical significance. They were images of the “pillar of fire” which had guided their forefathers through the trackless wilderness—again, in some sort the sacramental sign of a Divine presence. That light of the Exodus, in itself partial and transitory, found its ultimate and complete fulfilment in Him, who, in broad allusion to it, so emphatically names Himself, “The Light of the World.” Christ makes it, in its profoundest significance, the parable of Himself.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “As just before He had appropriated to Himself, the true Antitype, the water which had flowed from the smitten rock,

For a whole week, night after night, a gay and joyous scene went forward in the glare of those lights,—people dancing with wild enthusiasm and delight. The sombre shades of the last night—lamps exhausted and burnt out—presented the widest possible contrast. Nothing gives such a painful sense of the transitory and unsatisfactory nature of all festal joys as the forlorn look of a banquet-hall—its happy guests gone, its lights one by one extinguished. Moore thus paints this feeling of sadness and desolation.

“I feel like one who treads alone  
Some banquet-hall deserted,  
Whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead,  
And all but he departed.”

Over against the short-lived pleasures of earth—the torch-light joy of the world, from which the sense of unsatisfactoriness is never absent, in duration uncertain, cut short at least by the night of the grave—Christ stood in the midst of those waning lights and delights, and proclaimed Himself the absolute and unfailing Source of Light and Life to the world in its sin and woe-begone state. Thus, at all events, a natural occasion is found for this remarkable Self-proclamation.

so, now, He appropriates to Himself the pillar of fire, saying, *I AM the Light*—not of the Jewish nation only—but of the world.” Maclear, *Evidential Value of the Holy Eucharist*, p. 161.

But one can neither think nor write about this remarkable utterance without the mind at once turning to the sun, the central object in the natural universe and the one source of light, order, harmony, beauty, life. According to the second verse of the chapter, it was early morning when Christ "came again into the temple." Some have conjectured that, most likely it was the rising god of day, just lighting its "golden and marble magnificence," Himself with the people bathed in its glorious effulgence, which suggested, then and there, the thought of His essential and absolute relation to the moral universe, in perfect agreement with the old prophetic name: "Sun of Righteousness."

Light is the quickening pulse in nature; the primary condition of life and growth. The rock feels it not. Life apprehends and appropriates light. By its means we stand in a world of living beauty. It paints the color on the infant's cheek, the blush of the rose, the bloom of the peach, and makes all earth vocal with the hum of insects, and the song of birds. "Let there be light," was the first divine fiat. And the Spirit of light, brooding on the original chaos, was the one organizing, energizing element. Out of the wild waste came, at the Breath of the Almighty, the cosmos into beauty and being. Hence the phrase, "an animated world"—from *anima*, air,

breath, then, the vitalizing Spirit. Of light, Milton wrote:

“Before the Sun,  
Before the Heavens thou wert, and at the voice  
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest  
The rising world of waters dark and deep,  
Won from the void and formless Infinite.”

But long before the English bard penned his immortal poem, Israel's poet-king, in an imperishable classic, with no parallel in the literature of earth, gave us the story of its power, all so silent, yet so mighty. “The heavens declare the glory of God. . . In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.” No bridegroom more gorgeously arrayed; no giant clothed with greater strength to pursue a destined course! “His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” Far-off planets obey his gentle but resistless touch. Shining worlds, near and far, get from him their impulse and orbit, and through the ages hold on their luminous way.

His light is not mere lustre. For service and not self-glory, nor display, he was set in his place in the heavens. Flowers which close their petals at his setting, again open them at his rising. As the broad

surface of the earth, so ocean-depths tell of his life-engendering power. God has ordained the sun to a mission as glorious as it is beneficent and vast. In the moral and spiritual world is there anything or any One answering to this beneficent power in the material universe? "Earthly light is but a reflection of that which is spiritual."

One makes even this stupendous claim. Says Jesus: "I"—manger-born, yet Prince of heaven, Son of Mary, yet Son of God—"AM the Light of the world"—the one and absolute Source of life and salvation to man with the night and death of sin on his soul.

Again, let it be distinctly affirmed that He said this not in any purely prophetic or official sense, as though His mission consciously contemplated nothing more than the dispersion of the world's *ignorance*. Not a few persons stand in this narrow, as the one and exclusive, conception of Christ and Christianity. He is to make men better by simply making them wiser. The whole humanitarian scheme of religion turning on this faulty conception is involved, at every point, in utter confusion and self-contradiction. It comes short, as has already appeared, of the actual necessities of redemption. If sin were an affair of the intellect only, then the cure of the world's evils would stand in educational processes: the greater men's knowledge the greater and surer their power

for good. But this, no one needs be told, by no means holds true. The ages of greatest intellectual activity have not been specially noted for exemption from vice and immorality. Light in the understanding is not, in and of itself, grace in the heart and correctness of life.

It is commonly said, "Knowledge is power." True. But what sort of power? Good or evil, according to the use made of it: a polished blade for or against truth and righteousness; one thing in the head of a Voltaire, another and different thing in the head of a loving follower of Christ. Helping one man to defend the right, it will help another man to defend the wrong. "A polished financier can manage a bank; he can also manage a defalcation." Mere intellectual culture is not enough. Learning and righteousness, knowledge and faith are not interchangeable terms—mere synonyms.

The root of moral evil goes deeper than the intellect. In Scriptural usage, darkness is the emblem of depravity and guilt, as of ignorance and error. And man needs a Saviour from the power of sin as well as an instructor and leader in the path of duty. The metaphor includes this, and a great deal more. We do, in fact, stop short of its actual compass and purpose, if, in any exclusive sense, it be limited to the prophetic office of Christ. To be anything like

an effective and radical cure of the evil at fault, the office of the true Prophet of humanity must rest in a person able to bring deliverance to man as well from the corruption as the blindness of sin: be Himself the true Priest of humanity (Heb. vii. 25). To lead our sinful and erring race back to God *the* Prophet must Himself have come forth from God. Hence, in the very course of this conversation, Christ says: "I am from above: ye are of this world, I am not of this world."

When He says: "I AM the Light of the world," He says it of Himself *personally*, and not simply officially. There flashes out in this great utterance the self-conscious Divinity of the Speaker. "God is LIGHT." It is His essential property. "In Him is no darkness at all." This association of God with light is nothing new.<sup>2</sup> It comes down from the earliest

<sup>2</sup> "All nations have seen in fire something emblematic of the Divine nature. The Vedic Indians made Agni (fire) an actual god, and sang hymns to him with more fervor than to almost any other deity. The Persians maintained perpetual fires on their fire-altars, and supposed them to have a divine character. Hephaistos in the Greek and Vulcan in the Roman mythology were fire-gods; and Baal, Chemosh, Moloch, Tabiti, Orotal, represented more or less the same idea. Fire is in itself pure and purifying; in its effects mighty and terrible, or life-giving and comforting. Of all material things nothing is so suitable to represent God as this wonderful creation of His, so bright, so pure, so terrible, so comforting!" *Pulpit Comm.*, Exod., Vol. I., p. 58.



times. On the night in which God's first covenant was established with man, we read (Gen. xv. 17), that, after the sun had gone down, and it was dark, "a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp," i. e., lamp of fire,<sup>3</sup> passed between the pieces of animals which Abraham had divided and offered in sacrifice to God. This luminous appearance was the outward sign and sacrament to the father of the faithful of the actual presence of the Covenant-keeping God. How suggestive this lambent flame of the Pentecostal Wonder—the descent of the Holy Ghost on the apostles of the new covenant of grace in the singularly appropriate similitude of "cloven tongues as of fire" (Acts ii. 3)!

On another historic occasion, quite as important, we meet the same symbol of the Divine Presence—Moses, awe-struck in front of the *burning*, yet unconsumed bush, hearing a voice bidding him "put off the shoes from his feet, for the place was holy ground whereon he stood" (Ex. iii. 5). We have already learned the deep import of that strange sight. Later on, the same symbol of divine nearness and

<sup>3</sup> "This symbol of the Divine Presence seems to be anticipated in the mention of the *flaming sword* placed with the *cherubim* at the east of the garden of Eden to *keep the way of the tree of life*; and also to foreshadow the like symbol in the *Burning Bush*, and in the *Pillar of Fire*, and in the *Shekinah*." Medd, *The One Mediator*, Bampton Lectures, 1882, p. 190.

guidance reappears "in the pillar of fire" (Ex. xiii. 21), always in sight to lead fleeing Israel in their desert-pilgrimage, in lasting honor of which, we have just seen, the gigantic golden candelabra with their branching lamps were placed in the temple-court.

Then, too, the Shekinah, the luminous cloud resting between the cherubim, in the tabernacle and temple, was of the same character—the outward, visible manifestation of the Divine Presence. Nor is it seldom that this association of God with light is met with in the poetical and prophetical writings of Holy Scripture. Thus the Psalmist: "Thou coverest Thyself with *light* as a garment"; again, "The Lord is my *light* and my salvation" (Ps. civ. 2; xxvii. 1); so Habakkuk's vision of God: "His brightness was as the *light* . . . burning coals went forth at His feet"; so Isaiah: "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting *light*." To St. James, He was "the Father of *lights*, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"; to St. Paul, He dwells "in the *light* unto which no man can approach"; to him, also, the beatific state is "the inheritance of the saints in *light*"; while to the Apocalyptist, they dwell in *everlasting day*: "no more night"; "needing no light of candle; neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light." "God is *light*," says St. John.

How profoundly significant of the Divine element

of His being this unique, this unequivocal claim of Christ: "The Light of the world." Whether we are shocked by it or not, this is its old and absolute sense. He claims in it oneness with God. "I and My Father are one." He claims to be in full the Substance *personally* of what all these emblematic allusions were but the shadows. The luminous representations of God's Presence fall away as dissolving mists when the Divine Reality appears. All that was abstract and temporary in them takes on in Him concrete, personal and permanent form. Ineffable Light clothes Itself in the robes of our suffering humanity. Not in mere figure, then, nor yet office only, but answering Reality, Christ is *the* Light from heaven to us men on the earth to bring us safe on our way to heaven.

Upon His own lips, then, this is a plain and positive assertion of His Divinity. There is neither falsehood here, nor impious effrontery. If either, of so portentous and fearful a nature is it that the boldest being might well shrink from it. These cavilling Jews were not slow to take in the full compass of His words. In their ears it was "the mystical enunciation of His Divinity in a manner with which they had long been familiar." And what follows stands in consistent and coherent connection. This was in the mind of St. John when he wrote

in the golden prologue of his Gospel: "That was the true *LIGHT* which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." This was in the mind of St. Paul when he wrote: "The *light* of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God"; "the *light* of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This was in the mind of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews when he wrote: "The Brightness of His glory; the express Image of His Person." And this was in the minds of the framers of the Creed when thus, in battle and storm, formulating the truth for the believing recitation of all succeeding ages: "God of God, *LIGHT OF LIGHT*, very God of very God."

Light is self-manifesting. We see the sun in the light of the sun. It makes itself visible in making other things visible. Said Augustine, "Light, which brings other things to view, brings itself to view. It furnishes its own testimony; it opens healthful eyes, and itself is a witness to itself." "In Thy light shall we see light" (Ps. xxxvi. 9).

Christ is the Epiphany of God. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath *declared* Him" (St. John i. 18). "The only begotten Son"—then nearest and likest to God, one in Being and sympathy with every perfection of His nature: "the Son of man"

as well—then nearest and likest to man, one in nature and perfect sympathy with his every weakness, want and woe, Christ was the fittest of all beings to declare to man the holiness and purity of God, the devotion and duty of man—God's love of the sinner, His perfect hatred of the sin. In one person He is God's second Self, and man's best self.

This highest revelation of God takes the familiar form of a Personal Life, sublime and spotless, lived on our earth, lived under alike circumstances of trial and temptation, not in a serenity of atmosphere stirred by no breath of evil; and yet, from first to last, lived "without sin." Purity here is by no abstract rule. This law of our life stands forth in an exceptional Life of law. Not, as of old from Sinai's flaming mount, an eternal law thundered in mortal ears, but now enshrined for ever, in most winning form, in a life of stainless beauty. "Thou shalt not"—a stern, inflexible sound—is the key-note of the old order; but "*I* do always those things that please the Father"—willing, conscious, uniform, entire, loving obedience—the bright Pattern set us in the new order. Life here is from a law within, and not by the metes and bounds of outward rules and restraints. Not by divine commands set in a frame-work of penalties; not by a Book full even of majestic truths, touching, indeed, but only dis-

stantly, a chord of personal sympathy in hearts all alive to human suffering, and sorrow, and sin; not by a philosophic system with its abstract principles; not by the maxims of conventional morality; but by a Person of alike nature with ours, standing where we stand, feeling with us, knowing similar trials, meeting similar experiences, and set upon by similar temptations, yet Himself never touched by sin, always putting the sin with the temptation away from Him, we have God's fullest, highest revelation of His Being and Nature—the law of holiness in a Life of holiness, absolute Purity in human relations, for ever giving to men, with this perfect Standard, the strongest motive and mightiest impulse to the life of holiness on earth. This Life is the "Light of men."

"My dear Redeemer, and my Lord !

I read my duty in Thy word:

But in Thy Life the law appears,

Drawn out in living characters.

"Such was Thy truth, and such Thy zeal,

Such deference to Thy Father's will,

Thy love and meekness so divine,

I would transcribe and make them mine."

Christ does more than reveal God to man. He reveals man to himself. The light in and from Him detects, and, blessed be God, if it dissipate, the dark-

ness in us. In showing what as true men, in spirit, in character, in every-day life, we ought to be, He shows us, alas, how far short we are of being it. Showing up, He shames, also, the evil within us.<sup>4</sup> Never is an impure man so likely to be impressed with the sense of his own depravity and led up to a higher level as when made to stand in the presence of unsoiled, unblushing Purity. All the evil that is within him, unbidden and unbalked, springs to mind for his just censure and rebuke. How truly said the Lord: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that *darkness!*"

Let a man go with a flaming torch into some deep cavern, if he would see how the slimy hissing creatures which congregate there stir, and move about uneasily, and hurry to get away from the light, and hide in the deeper darkness. Worse things than lizards and horrid reptiles, making their abode in dens and dark caves, are at home

<sup>4</sup> "He stands before the world in perfect purity, and we feel as men could not feel before He came, the imperfection, the impurity of the world. The line of separation is drawn for ever, and the conscience of men acknowledges that it is rightly drawn. Whether we know it or not, the light which streams from Christ is ever opening the way to a clearer distinction between good and evil. His coming is a judgment. The light and the darkness are not blended in Him, as they are in us, so that opinion can be doubtful. But His Presence is an absolute revelation of light." Canon Westcott, *The Revelation of the Father*, p. 52.

in the human heart. Only let the light of this pure Life drive out all that is vile and foul. Happy the man, and blessed the life, to whom this Light from heaven, bringing deepest conviction of de-filement and guilt, nor content to live any longer therein, passes "out of darkness into His marvellous light." He needs only to *follow* it that he should know, more and more, its quickening, cheering, trans-figuring energies.

Such, for all these eighteen centuries, has been the bettering action of this one pure, and spotless, and holy Life. And the most marvellous thing about it all is, that it is doing, not less, but more of it the further on we get from the particular age when the humble Galilean went up and down the familiar paths of men: the further on we get from this Personal Beginning of the Christian era. A most remarkable thing this with the life of Christ, if men did but allow it a place in their thoughts! It is without a parallel. There is no approach to it in the whole history of mankind. Where is there another Name of undying prestige and power? Ordinarily the memory of the noblest earthly character lives not beyond the century that gave him birth. He may count himself fortunate if that memory, perchance, fades not away while he lives.

But here is a sweet and gentle, a pure and potent



life taking to itself wider influence and range as the centuries multiply and the ages roll on—touching the springs of life, individual, social and national, to purify it and make it better. Well nigh nineteen hundred years ago, Jesus lived and walked the earth. Yet how marvellously true it is, He still lives and walks the earth: everywhere the recognized Presence of all bettering forces in individual character, in human society. With emphasis He declared it, as no other being could or dared to, and in a thousand beneficent activities, too, has verified the declaration of perpetual being and power: “Lo, I AM with you alway, even to the end of the world.”

Neither is He to be remanded, in the way of historic record, to a dead past, issues buried and forgotten; nor, in the way of distant residence, oblivious of the world He once graced with His presence, to the heavens whither He has gone. He belongs to this age and to every age, to this and every era of the world as the centuries come and go; and this, in a far deeper sense even and with wider power than He ever belonged to His own age, people, country. He is the Contemporary of every age and all men. His presence is perennial. Christ abideth ever: “ONCE FOR ALL”—not once and no more, but ONCE AND ALWAYS; everywhere a sanctifying factor in the bosom of our sinful and sinning humanity;

everywhere the leader of human thought and life. And to the shame of the world be it spoken, that at best giving back only a marred and broken image of our Lord, this divine leadership is not more generally owned and obeyed.

Besides, He is the leader of all that goes under the title of human progress. "The Light of the *world*," so He Himself says. Light is always for action, movement, progress, not self-absorbed contemplation. "No pent-up Utica contracts" His powers. No narrow boundaries, no territorial limits, no mere Holy Land, no Judaic precedence or preference, no barriers of caste or color, no intolerant and ingrained prejudices are ever to hedge in and hold for selfish monopoly this Light of humanity: this grace of life and salvation to all men. "He is the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world": set in the moral heavens for the good of other lands beside Judea, and other people beside the Jews. In very fact, how has He shown Himself to be "a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel" (St. Luke ii. 32)!

"The Living Christ," says one, "has been moving with the van of human progress, and is leading the age's highest and best thinking to-day." All history worth reading is that of Christian ideas as these have been incorporated into the laws, institutions, and

social life of the historic nations. The world has moved immensely during these eighteen Christian centuries. And undeniably the one and true secret, the inspiration and continuous impulse to all this progress has been, with the advent of Christ, the infusion of a higher order of thought and spirit, purpose and action into the world's life. Already in advance then, how significantly named: "THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS!"

Back of everything like social elevation, moral culture, historic progress, the disappearance of oppressive rule, the greater liberty of the subject, the extension of equal rights to all, the abolition of state-institutions coupled with wrong though hoary with antiquity, kindlier interest of man in man, sweeter charities, broader provision in homes and hospitals for all kinds of diseases and afflictions;—back of all this stands, in silent but potent majesty, like the sun amid luminous worlds, the Christ of history.

The most brilliant page in all history is that recounting the trials and triumphs of Christian missions; dotting the world over with centres of educational and religious activity, lifting up the nations to a higher plane, converting "the habitations of cruelty" into abodes of domestic purity and peace, turning savagery into gentleness, and barbarous night

into glorious day. This missionary zeal, not any more remarkable for its achievements than the wide scale of liberality on which it is conducted and the singular devotion of holy men and women it has enlisted, heroically giving up all that makes life dear to bear *the* Light to dark and distant lands; this abatement of the most gigantic wrongs in civil and social relations; and whatever of corporate kindness, of commercial integrity, of national comity—the settlement of differences and difficulties by the pen rather than the sword—ever more and more characteristic of this age;—all alike find their enduring principle and motive in the sweetness and sublimity of a Life, which, while it shames the passions of man, stimulates and strengthens all that is good in his nature.

Even Lecky furnishes this strong testimony to the reclaiming and elevating power of Christ—all the stronger because of the writer's known unbelief in the supernatural origin of Christianity. "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love, and has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions; has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the highest incentive to its practice,

and has exerted so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and all the exhortations of moralists. This, has, indeed, been the well-spring of whatever is best and purest in the Christian life. Amid all the sins and failings, amid all the priestcraft and persecution and fanaticism that have defaced the church, 'it has preserved in the character and example of its Founder an enduring principle of regeneration.'<sup>5</sup>

Only see how incarnate Purity, quiet and gentle, yet potent as the sun in our heavens, "is leaving in its wake long furrows of living light on the surface of the ages!"

"Holy Jesus, Fount of Light!  
 As crystal clear, for ever bright,  
 Thou Stream o'erflowing, pure and free;  
 The brightness of the cherubim,  
 The glow of burning seraphim,  
 Are darkness when compared with Thee.  
 Be Thou my pattern bright,  
 My study and delight,  
 My all in all.  
 Oh, teach Thou me, that I may be  
 All pure and holy, like to Thee!"

<sup>5</sup> *History of European Morals*, Vol. II., p. 9.



VI.

The Messiahship of Jesus.

“Sion the marvellous story be telling,  
The Son of the Highest, how lowly His birth !  
The brightest archangel in glory excelling,  
He stoops to redeem thee, He reigns upon earth :  
Shout the glad tidings exultingly sing;  
Jerusalem triumphs, Messiah is King !

“Mortals, your homage be gratefully bringing,  
And sweet let the gladsome Hosanna arise;  
Ye angels the full Alleluia be singing;  
One chorus resound through the earth and the skies :  
Shout the glad tidings, exultingly sing;  
Jerusalem triumphs, Messiah is King !”



## VI.

### The Messiahship of Jesus.

*“The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when He is come, He will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee AM HE.”*  
—ST. JOHN IV. 25, 26.

MODES of life have greatly changed with the changing centuries. This has worked necessary changes in the methods employed of bringing Divine truth to bear on the human conscience. For the most part, the simplicity of the direct, personal appeal has passed away with the vast growth of population. Cathedrals, churches, chapels have taken the place of the way-side well, the lake-shore, the sycamore-tree, the Bethany home. To do anything for human souls with Christian truth we must stand in the vast congregation; must work with and upon multitudes; move men as best we can in large assemblies.

Christ worked with individuals, doing His most

effective work in private interviews—the close probing of heart and conscience only possible then. What aptness and artlessness belonged to His methods. This Greater than Shakespeare found

“tongues in trees, books in running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.”

The habits of the people, customs of social life, scenes passing at the moment before men's eyes were pressed by Him into this highest service as familiar illustrations of heavenly truth. The simple husbandry of the country, a fact in nature, a necessity in Oriental privations, an incident in domestic life and duty—a woman coming to a common well to “draw water”—furnished both the occasion and the text for preaching a direct sermon, and leading the soul, with no other thought than purely natural aim and end, bent only on satisfaction of alike earthly kind, to know first a deeper spiritual need, and then open itself to satisfying and imperishable joys: imploring, from its own eternal Spring-head, “the Water of Life.”

The word here and now spoken by Him, who is “The Word,” was for this poor woman's life. And she came to know it. In individual history how often the greatest event turns seemingly on the merest trifle; the destiny of a soul on such

casual meeting with a stranger; a man's turning this way or that.

“Despise not thou a small thing, either for evil or for good;  
For a look may work thy ruin, or a word create thy wealth.”

In going from Judea to Galilee, the Evangelist writes, Christ “must *needs* go through Samaria.” The necessity hinted at was more than local. Samaria was, indeed, intermediate; and gave the shorter route from the south. But there was a serious objection to it, well nigh insurmountable to the Jew travelling northward. Nations may be separated from each other by antipathies and prejudices more difficult to surmount than intervening mountains. Deadly hatred of long standing kept the Jews and Samaritans asunder, preventing everything like friendly relations, or free and familiar intercourse. Hostility was notorious and open.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Objection is made to the historical character of the fourth Gospel by Sir Richard Hanson, *The Jesus of History*, because this narrative makes the Samaritans, in spite of the hostility of the Jews, sharers in their Messianic expectations. Nevertheless the fact remains, that the Samaritans did at that time actually expect a Messiah, and continue to do so to this day. Though rejecting the prophetic books, they cherished the Pentateuch wherein this single prediction—that second Prophet like unto Moses, to whom all the world was to hearken—“sufficed to gather round it a legend, as defined if less copious than that of the Jews.” Cf. Sanday, *Authorship and Historical Character of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 89.

Among the Jews the very name of Samaritan was a common term of reproach. Thus, when they would speak in the most contemptuous way of Christ, it was: "We know that thou art a *Samaritan*, and hast a devil" (St. John viii. 48).

Because of this unfriendliness, the widest detour generally was made in passing from southern to northern Palestine; mostly the circuitous route by Perea. Jesus was a Jew; such by human birth, and yet, by the marvellous constitution of His person, He was the God-man, the universal Man. And He who came to save mankind neither could share in, nor sympathize with, such mean and narrow prejudices. Coming "to seek and save the lost" of every name and nationality, hated Samaria is not to be passed by. This great Shepherd of humanity—breaking down every wall of partition, taking out of the way every root of bitterness and dislike, reconciling different nations to each other in full reconciliation to a common Father—"must needs go through Samaria" after that one sheep which had widely strayed in the wilderness.

There is, it is generally conceded, an air of genuineness about this incident. Even Renan admits "that most of the circumstances of the narrative bear a striking stamp of truth." It could hardly have been fabricated. What could have been more natural

and proper than this woman's going to the village well for water? This was woman's work in that Eastern world, coming down from that earlier time when Rebecca won for herself a husband in drawing water for Abraham's servant (Gen. xxiv. 17-19). The lapse of centuries had wrought no change in this homely office. And this woman, doubtless, in the performance of household duties had gone a thousand times before to this well to get water, without anything strange or remarkable happening. But going to-day on this usual errand, she meets the Lord of Life, in the person of a weary Wayfarer sitting on the well, who, in His own thirst, does but ask her for a drink of water. How were these words of the Divine Master made eternally good to her in the blessedness which so speedily followed: "Who-soever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward" (St. Mark ix. 41).

We note, in sublime act, that beautiful blending of the divine and human elements which constituted the unique and exceptional nature of Christ's person. "Heaven lies about us in our infancy," Wordsworth says. It is a truly *earthly* picture, this fourth chapter of St. John's Gospel gives us, and yet the truly *heavenly* lies all about it. The scene is thor-

oughly *human* in every particular—none more so in our Lord's whole history—and yet how the thoroughly *Divine* shines through it all! As a disclosure of His true character, it stands among the choicest and clearest of His *personal* epiphanies. "The first great revelation of the Saviour was to humble shepherds. The first direct disclosure of Himself as Messiah was to a humble Samaritan woman."

Tender touches of humanity make Him and us akin. Thirst and weariness came to Him as to us by the morning's long walk. Thirst is a natural desire. The first cry of nature, the moistening of parched lips is love's last ministration to the dying. "I thirst," were the Lord's own dying words. And this weary Man makes this request of the woman: "Give me to drink." One with us in our nature, He was one with us in its common infirmities, weariness, hunger, thirst.

Was this all? nothing besides these evidences of true humanity? Does nothing other and infinitely more shine through those dust-covered garments, that tired frame? Yes, remarkable as it is, the "Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open"—reading as from an unrolled scroll the blurred and blotted record of a shameless life—prefers, in the humble garb of that way-worn Stranger, that simple request. How unmistakably this comes out in the

close and searching interview which follows, revealing an insight into the sorrowful career of one hitherto unknown, a foreknowledge of bad secrets going altogether beyond the power of mere human penetration. Our impure thoughts and bitter life-secrets we may wrap in a veil impenetrable to human eye. But from One eye "no secrets are hid." "Thou, Lord, knowest my down-sitting, and mine uprising; Thou understandest my thoughts long before. Thou art about my path, and about my bed; and spiest out all my ways."

Strange enough, this unknown Traveller, in weariness and thirst, asking for a cup of water, exercises this absolute prerogative of God. To the utter dismay of this child of sin and shame, He reads the dark secrets of that wanton life—secrets which she supposed were hid in her own breast. A simple direction arouses a dormant conscience, and makes her aware that no ordinary man at least stands before her. "Go call thy husband." An Ithuriel spear this that pierces the veil behind which she had been hiding her true self! How evident the struggle to keep back from Him and from herself the shameful secret, "I have no husband." Yes, striking the probe a little deeper into the guilty conscience, the Divine Physician replies: "Thou hast well said, I have no husband; for thou hast

had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly."

It was a marvellous revelation of her true self. She cannot but be amazed. Nor is she slow to take in the gravity of the situation, nor, in her own way, to measure the character of the Speaker. "Thou art a Prophet, I perceive, Sir: thou standest nearer than ordinary mortals to the Power above; perchance, thou canst lead erring feet into the better path. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

Alas, what a strange mixture of sincerity and deceit is this human heart! Even when the Breath of a better life is blowing upon it; even when the eye is being turned in on itself with mortification and surprise; even when contrition over past faults or present shame opens the flood-gates of sorrow, how ready to be itself diverted, or to divert itself, from its immediate and highest concerns, by some general and unimportant suggestion about religion. So it was here. "The heart, quivering before the eye that reads it as it never before had read itself, shrinks from the light that is let in upon it. She will speak of anything rather than of self." She is quite ready to discuss with this prophet of the Jews the proper *place* of worship—Jerusalem or Gerizim?



Foreign as the inquiry is to His purpose, He skilfully leads her thoughts away from the place of worship—an indifferent matter altogether—to the object and right spirit of worship, something vital and serious. “Woman!” How the very mode of address—than which there is on the lips of a true man no higher term of respect, of admiration, of affection—“woman!” treating her with all the respect becoming her sex, recalling a sense of her own selfhood even though smirched, and so awakening all the *woman’s* confidence in Him—how, I say, the very mode of address was calculated to sweep away, in one intensely thoughtful moment, all that was frivolous in her nature, or trifling in her manner! The highest thing a man can say of mother, wife, or sister is, she is a *woman*. How, on Christ’s own pure lips, the word itself is for ever charged with reverence and homage! It was, in all the agony of His dying hour, the last loving word to his mother: “WOMAN, behold thy son.”

And even here where there had been such a frightful forfeiture of respect in the sacrifice of all womanly virtues, in His very mode of address, He honors the claim which is her natural due: “Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. . . . God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” Beyond every

question of place and modes of worship is sincerity in the worshipper—a heart in tune with every act of devotion. Measured by this Divine rule, not seldom worship fails in its true intent whether conducted by simplest forms or most pompous ceremonials.

As yet the poor woman stands in a sort of dream-land. The words “Father,” “Spirit,” “truth,” strike a chord in her dull heart, but only as a far-off sound, like one just waking out of sleep. In her perplexity, the half-conscious thought throws itself into these words: “I know that MESSIAS cometh, which is called Christ; when He is come, He will tell us all things”—Prophet greater than the world has ever had, all the doubts and difficulties of our mind will be solved in the MESSIAH’S coming.

Messiah, the Hebrew original of its Greek equivalent *Χριστός* (Christ)—the one distinctive official title of our Lord, on its historical side His by exclusive right and solitary grandeur, *the* Prophet, Priest and King of humanity—designates the Anointed One, with undoubted reference to the holy oil anciently used in the consecration of Israel’s sovereigns from Saul onward. Noble in person, his reign was a national calamity. New but unfulfilled hopes were created by David’s reign. Thenceforth, as the concentration of its rays by a sun-glass to a brilliant focal point, the title “Son of David”—the Lord’s

Anointed, *Messiah*—gathered up and, more and more, centred in itself with burning intensity the hopes of the people even as the need of deliverance showed itself. Thenceforth the name stood for that ideal Character, whose actual coming was, under one form or another, the burden of Jewish literature, the centre of Jewish faith and feeling, the key to that wonderful sacrificial system which divinely obtained, the image, in dim and distant outline, before the prevision of the Seer, the theme of Psalmist, the hope of the people through centuries, a belief broadly popular. Later on it stood for the Person who, as a ransom, was by the sacrifice of His own life a substitute for the sins of others. This general expectation, so devout and simple, was the perspicuous distinction of Jewish thought and life on their religious side. It was a waiting world. This was its marked characteristic. And, more or less consciously, it knew for whom it waited.

Nor, in its dream of a golden age, was the heathen world altogether without some share, vaguely indeed, in this Messianic thought and expectation. Its cry of woe, looking beyond itself for deliverance, more strangely looking to the Orient, brings out its sense both of dire need and help necessarily from abroad. The classic student will readily recall the allusion of Tacitus to a general impression of the Orient at

sometime waxing strong and Judea taking the lead of affairs, and also Suetonius's reiteration of the same thing in similar language—"an old and constant opinion prevailing over all the Orient"; and more especially Virgil's "wondrous boy," whose signal birth is anticipated as a blessing the world over, the harbinger of the better age, the stock of a high-born race, the head of a new line. Thus,

"A mighty line of ages springs anew;  
The Maid returns and Saturn's golden prime;  
From heaven on high a new-born race descends."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.* V. 13; Suetonius, X. 4; Virgil, *Eclog.*, IV. In the precise form here given to this general impression, Dean Stanley sees the influence somehow of the Mysterious Child of Isaiah's glowing prediction (vii. 14; ix. 6), travelling far beyond its own Jewish home. "The expectation of an actual child within a short time, and the endeavor to concentrate on that child the far loftier aspirations with which, as it were, the *air was full*, is almost the same in the Hebrew Prophet and the Roman poet." *Hist. of Jewish Church*, Vol. II., p. 509. Before him, Bishop Lowth had said of this remarkable poem: "There are so many and so manifest indications of the fact (originally derived from sacred fountain) in the poem itself, that no person who reads it attentively can retain a doubt upon this head." *Lect. on Hebrew Poetry*, Lect. XXI. In his Hulsean Lectures (1846), "*The Unconscious Prophecies of Heathendom*," Archbp. Trench, in his own masterly way, shows how the Messianic idea, sometimes in strange anticipations of Christ, sometimes in shocking exaggerations or monstrous caricatures, was the in-lying thought of the human soul, expressive of its own universal sense of need. "The worth," he says, "of the unspeakable gift which in Christ is ours, is wonderfully testified by the fact

Particularly was the Jewish air full of Messianic hope. From the establishment of the kingdom, its regal aspect was the prevailing form. Two things come out: the Messiah was to be a king, and a son of David. In the failure of David and the whole line of kingly men to realize in any just sense the general expectation, foundation was laid for the *ideal* kingdom and the *ideal* king he was taken to represent. Any sense of imperfection suggests the idea of, and at the same time creates a longing for the perfect. Our sinfulness, felt and deplored, awakens the feeling of a spiritual need reaching after *the* sinless One and perfectly pure. So it was here. The Davidic character was imperfect; the actual kingship only a partial and incomplete realization of what it involved. Hence the image of the *ideal* King more and more taking possession of the national heart, and making room for that Messianic thought running as a golden thread through all Jewish literature, canonical and apocryphal.

By this thread we move intelligently through the that all should have been in one way or another either asking for that gift, or fancying that they had gotten it, or mourning its departure, or providing substitutes for it. . . . For as the earth in its long polar night seeks to supply the absence of the day by the generation of the northern lights, so does each people in the long night of its heathen darkness bring forth in its yearning after the life of Christ, a faint and glimmering substitute." Lect. II.

precedent centuries of Jewish history, life, and longing. It is the unifying thought of their sacred writings. Back of kings and priestly men, back of Seers and Psalmists, stands a silent and majestic Figure, shaping the thought of those expectant ages, and so "preparing and making ready the way" for His advent and welcome who, in God's time, came in as His personal Answer to the world's great need and hope. "Psalmorum clavis Christi fides." "The golden key of the Psalter lies in a Pierced Hand."

Of the posture of the Jewish mind generally in this particular, there is no lack of evidence in the Evangelical history. With no interest in the advent of the Messianic Prince beyond grave royal apprehension, Herod makes special inquiry, "where *the* Christ should be born" (St. Matt. ii. 4). Upon the first appearance of John Baptist, and his fearless arraignment of the sins of the age, we are told that "all men mused"—reasoned, debated—"in their hearts of John, whether he were *the* Christ, or not" (St. Luke iii. 15; St. John i. 19-21). When this same fearless preacher of righteousness was cast into the gloomy prison of Machærus, he sent, in great perplexity of mind, a commission to Christ, with the direct question, "Art thou He that should *come*" (St. Matt. xi. 3)? This wonder of the general mind was thus expressed, "Of a truth this is *the* Prophet," "This is *the* Christ,"

"Waiting for the Consolation of Israel." Simeon, a representative of the Jewish faith and feeling of the time, gave this confident utterance to the realization at last of the great Hope:

"Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart  
In peace, according to Thy word:  
For mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation,  
Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people;  
A Light to lighten the Gentiles,  
And the Glory of Thy people Israel."

These things considered, it should be no surprise that this Samaritaness was touched by the general Messianic expectation. Of mixed Jewish blood, occupying a contiguous territory, counterfeiting their worship, having the Pentateuch, the Samaritans shared quite naturally in the same national hope. The names familiar with them, "The Converter," "The Restorer," "The Guide," show a Messianic conception freed from everything like political significance. Its prophetic character and dignity are its main features: a spiritual Leader, a divine Teacher, who like Moses (Deut. xviii. 15), would open to them the Divine mind and will. So the one thought associated in this woman's mind with the Messiah's coming was this: "He will *tell* us all things." "Truth and not dominion was the blessing she connected with His mission."

This explains one other thing. Hers is the dis-

tion of getting the first open declaration from Christ of personal identity with Israel's Prince of promise: "I that speak unto thee AM HE." The revelation is unique. There is only one other declaration in the Gospels like it. Of the blind man restored to sight He asked, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God." Back came the question, "Who is He, sir, that I might believe on Him?" And forthwith came this second avowal of His real character: "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee" (St. John ix. 35-37). No one before her had been so honored as this woman; not Nicodemus in the privacy of a personal interview; not as yet the disciples nearest to Him in the narrower circle of friends; and not, of course, the Jews demanding His authority for expelling with platted thong from the holy temple its huckstering profaners. In fact, the title is only used once beside in the New Testament, and then not by Him, but of Him, when Andrew, hurrying off to Peter, declares: "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" (St. John i. 41). Why His openness in this instance, and His uniform silence at other times? Why this plain disclosure of Himself to this Samaritan, and His reserve with the Jews generally. Hostile criticism sees here only weakness of character, as though



Christ was wanting in the heroic virtues. However, the true reason lies in the very fact of her nationality.

Growing directly out of the national depression, and the kingly form it had well nigh exclusively assumed, the Messianic idea among the Jews was debased by the political aspect, and mainly associated with civil, and not religious, affairs. Not so much for a spiritual as a temporal Prince were they looking, clothed with power to change their civic condition, and re-establish the splendor of the Davidic throne.<sup>3</sup> And hence the reserve with them as to His personal identity with the Messianic

<sup>3</sup> "The Gospel of St. John from first to last is a record of the conflict between men's thoughts of Christ, and Christ's revelations of Himself." Westcott, *The Revelation of the Father*, p. 25.

Sanday shows how this very corruption of the Messianic belief is an incontrovertible proof of the historical character of the fourth Gospel. "It is almost superfluous to point out how difficult, how impossible it would have been for a writer wholly *ab extra* to throw himself into the midst of these hopes and feelings, and to reproduce them, not as if they were something new that he had learned, but as part of an atmosphere that he had himself once breathed. There is no stronger proof both of the genuineness and of the authenticity of the fourth Gospel than the way in which it reflects the current Messianic idea. It is only surprising how, with such phenomena before them, critics could have been found to place the composition of it in the middle of the second century, and to explain it by an impossible combination of orthodoxies and heterodoxies, when the true and simple solution lay so near at hand." *Authorship and Historical Character of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 124.

Prince, and His avoidance of their purpose when they would have made Him a King (St. John vi. 15). An open declaration of the fact would likely have provoked civil excitements of a serious nature, and so embarrassed the main intent of His mission. Neither would He minister to their false Messianic views, nor in any way lend himself to political agitations. On Samaritan soil where the expectation took the form of spiritual guide and prophetic office, there was no danger of this. And hence the explicit assurance: "I that speak unto thee am the Messiah."

Piercing into the depth of meaning this avowal contains, the first inquiry must be into the essential nature of the Messianic idea, so thoroughly pervading the history of the Hebrew people, their literature, poetic and prophetic, and as well the general mind through vast centuries of earnest hope and longing; and the second inquiry must be into the realization of this idea in the person and mission of Jesus Christ.

No thoughtful student of history has failed to discover in every people some peculiarity or trait: the Genius of the nation, the idea leading their development and that they have set themselves to realize, the purpose struggling in their course to birth and being. For instance, no student of Classic

history need be told that the genius of the Greeks was the idea of the Beautiful. It came out in poetry, in sculpture, in architecture, in every department of art. Here they were originals. In temples, in public buildings, in places of general resort, in umbrageous groves, everywhere there was unrivalled beauty in richest profusion. Excelling in all matters of taste, the world ever since has sat a learner at their feet, studying the models they gave.

Nor need any student be told that the idea of Law, of universal dominion, was the genius of the Romans. Hence the vast empire, and subject-nations, far and wide, bending to the iron yoke. And just as little need he be told that the genius of the more ancient Hebrews was moral and spiritual, the deeper idea of religion; and this not under the form of mere human speculation and theory, but grander than everything of that sort, of Divine Revelation, direct and positive.

In the history of mankind this people occupied a place by themselves. Political, social, and above all, religious life was as different among them as though they had, in fact, occupied a continent apart by themselves. They were a unique people. The idea of God—a Personal Being, to be loved, and worshipped, and obeyed, visiting with His

displeasure iniquity, transgression, and sin—marked them off from all the world besides. This isolation divinely provided for, and for centuries maintained through varying fortunes and in spite of corrupting tendencies pressing upon and sometimes overmastering them, gave them a religious character as singular as it was well defined.

Searching for the secret of this national exclusion, this steadfast tenacity to an idea, it is to be found in what unmistakably forms the burden of the Hebrew Scriptures, the deepest thought and life of the people—the Messianic Belief—the promise of Heaven's help to man enshrined in Personal Form. What candid reader can possibly fail to catch this leading thought, distinguishing these writings from any and all others termed sacred!

But whether this general Messianic belief contemplated exactly the union of the divine and human in a single person, as afterwards came to pass in Christ, is extremely doubtful. We are in danger of reading our fuller revelation into precedent feeling after God and His truth. Then, it would seem, they were considered and treated as separable elements, and their juncture the result merely of divine association or *afflatus* (Is. xi. 2). In this the transcendent mystery of the Incarnation far exceeds the utmost bound of Jewish anticipation and

thought. In the marvellous union of divinity and humanity in His person, Christ comes in emphatically as the Surprise, and not the Product, of history.

But this much cannot be disputed, the thoroughly Messianic character of the ancient Scriptures. The first hint, faint and distant, indeed, of salvation by superhuman help stands in close connection with the Fall—the serpent-Bruiser of the Edenic promise. In the Abrahamic separation and covenant, and onward ever more and more distinctly, the promise stands in a majestic Figure that holds, age after age, the faith and heart of this God-chosen race. Of its concrete and personal character the names are the plainest indication.

At first, and broadly, it was the Seed of the woman in deadly struggle with and actual triumph over the powers of evil; then more definitely the Seed of Abraham bringing at length an universal blessing; then the coming of the dying patriarch's Shiloh; then the Prophet like unto Moses; then the Branch out of Jesse's stem—David's son yet David's Lord; then the ideal King of the acknowledged Messianic Psalms, for whom, even with all their imperfections and failings, the David and Solomon of actual history stood; then Isaiah's Wonderful Child, the Virgin-born Immanuel; then

Isaiah's Servant of Jehovah, His elect, His soul's Delight, invested with humility and meekness, yet fulfilling His will despite all difficulties; then Isaiah's Man of sorrows, his Vicarious Sufferer, with marred visage, and though the rejected of men, yet smitten for their transgression; then Jeremiah's Just King; then Daniel's Son of Man with perpetual dominion; then more explicitly Daniel's Messiah; then Zechariah's Lowly but Triumphant King; then Micah's Bethlehem-born Ruler; then Haggai's Universal Desire; then Malachi's Messenger of the Covenant; then John Baptist's Coming One; then Simeon's Consolation of Israel; then this Samaritan's Messiah; and then this plain declaration of Jesus of Nazareth: "I that speak unto thee AM HE."

How remarkable the *personal* character of the Messianic hope, through all the vicissitudes of this wonderful people, stretching on from the very garden of Eden to Bethlehem's rude manger. Most remarkable its Personal realization at last in the Virgin's son, yet the Son of God.

"Thou Patriarchs' joy, Thou Prophets' song,  
Thou heavenly Day-spring, looked for long,  
Thou Son of Man, Incarnate Word,  
Great David's Son, great David's Lord!"

VII.

The Allegory of the Vine—Its Personal Sense.

“Jesus, immutably the same,  
Thou true and living Vine,  
Around Thy all-supporting stem  
My feeble arms I twine.

“Quickened by Thee and kept alive  
I flourish and bear fruit;  
My life I from Thy sap derive,  
My vigor from Thy root.”



## VII.

### The Allegory of the Vine—Its Personal Sense.

*"I AM the true Vine."*—ST. JOHN xv. 1

THE placid lake reflects the sky above it, and because it is above it. Everywhere nature is but the image and copy of heavenly things. First heaven, then the earth; God, first, then man, His image and reflection (Gen. i. 26, 27; 1 Cor. xi. 7), partial, inadequate, imperfect, broken, marred, nevertheless, His image. First, the absolute, self-existent God, then man, like Him, a thinking, willing being—a person.

Reaching up a step higher: in the depths of eternity, the Father and His essential Son, then in the mystery of the Incarnation, "*the* Image of the invisible God" (Col. i. 15; II Cor. iv. 4), His Self-reflection, "the Brightness of His glory," the Personal Expression in highest creaturely form, adequate, perfect, faultless, not marred in any degree.

Back of all imagery, then, to make it a true thing

in itself, must stand an answering reality, the very Substance casting the shadow. No new thing is it to find in nature a very storehouse of heavenly copies; reflections, more or less close and exact, of archetypal and original patterns. Writers, ancient and modern, profane and sacred, poets and philosophers alike, have been keenly alive to this inner sense and profounder use of nature. In his deep insight into the meaning of nature's mysteries, the corypheus of the sacred writers seizes upon them as in themselves more than simple illustrations of Divine truths, proofs and witnesses in fact, stored away in them, like precious ore in its rocky bed only awaiting a skilful hand to bring it forth. Thus, with bold stroke, he makes it clear that all nature is full of the resurrection: that the natural must die ere the spiritual body can appear (I Cor. xv. 36).

Among Church fathers, Tertullian especially is found making this higher use of nature in explanation of the same majestic fact. "All things here are witnesses," he says, "of a resurrection; all things in nature are but prophetic outlines of Divine operations, God not merely *speaking* parables, but *doing* them." And among English poets, Milton gives this suggestive hint,—

"What if earth

Be but the shadow of heaven and things therein

Each to other like, more than on earth is thought?"

Of course, the mind of the Author of nature, we should think, would be especially open to these deeper harmonies. A prominent characteristic of Christ's teachings is this higher use of nature, making it as well the witness to as the vehicle of sublimest truths—"apples of gold" in network of silver; the bread of life passed to mortals in baskets of familiar framework. Heavenly relations and holiest duties are enshrined by Him in analogies, allegories, and parables, revealing the most wonderful master-ship both of nature and thought. Not with Him was it, as Keble says it is with us,

"Two worlds are ours: 'tis only *sin*  
 Forbids us to desecry  
 The mystic heaven and earth within,  
 Plain as the sea and sky."

Back of this figurative language stands a grand Personality. Not metonymically merely, but personally Christ says, "I AM the true Vine."

But how are we to take this *true*? To English minds the difficulty lies in the *double* use of the word: sometimes as opposed to the false, at other times to the faulty, the imperfect—falling short of its own idea, or end, or mission. To Israel of old this same metaphor of the vine had frequently been applied in the earlier Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> Though a vine,

<sup>1</sup> "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it" (Psalm lxxx. 8). "Yet I had planted

yet the Jewish Church had, in its long and checkered history, failed in its Divine mission. Severe censure is ever being heaped upon it, not, indeed, for not being a vine, but this the rather, while being a vine, and more a vine of God's own planting, yet ever bringing forth vicious fruit—coming short of its own generous promises, its gracious advantages, and the just expectation of Him who planted it in its fertile hill (Is. v. 4; Deut. xxxii. 32). In this very viciousness, and consequent disappointment and defeat of Divine intentions, God's Israel had shown itself to be, not a false, but sadly faulty vine—not His *true* Vine.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly the distinction lies between the faulty and the true, the partial and the perfect—between what has not and what has at length fully realized the Divine Idea. It is a common saying with us—"true to the idea," *i. e.*, filling up full all the name itself implies or promises. Just this the "true Vine," the New Stock or Life-Tree of humanity is to be; not, as in the earlier instance, a merely partial and inadequate, but now the abiding and adequate, the abso-

thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed; how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me" (Jer. ii. 21)? "Planted it with the choicest vine. The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant" (Is. v. 2, 7). "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself" (Hosea x. 1).

<sup>2</sup> On ἀληθής and ἀληθινός, see Archbp. Trench's *Synonyms of the New Testament*, pp. 48-52.

lute and Personal realization of God's purpose of life and salvation to the world smitten unto death by sin.

On the lips of Christ, the *true* here is the ideal, genuine, perennial over against all that was purely relative and shadowy—earth's feeble copy and failure. The "*true* Vine" is that which answers in full its Divine intent and abideth ever. The "*true* tabernacle" is Heaven itself (Heb. ix. 24); the "*true* Bread is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (St. John vi. 33)—the everlasting Archetype whereof the manna in the desert was but the faint shadow and symbol; the "*true* Light is that which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (St. John i. 9), whereof the Pillar of Fire and Bethlehem's Star leading the Magi were but poor and imperfect images; the "*true* God" is the absolute, Self-existent, Personal God, "from everlasting to everlasting," the fontal Source of all being, who only hath eternal life (Ps. xc. 2; Jer. x. 10; St. John xvii. 3; I Tim. vi. 16); the "*true* riches" are treasures on high, set beyond all earthly contingencies, the incorruptible inheritance and the unfading crown. Earthly things are all shadowy, evanescent, transitory, not the substantial and the *true*. In the deepest element of His nature, Christ is not "of the earth, earthy," but "the Lord from heaven" (I Cor. xv. 47), therefore, the true, essential, life-giving Vine.

Perhaps, then, a better rendering for this divine "*true*" is our good English word *very*, in its old sense and not uncommon usage, as we still say, "It is the *very* thing," *i. e.*, answers the end exactly. Better still, perhaps, is Lange's suggestive word, "the *essential* Vine," (der wesentliche Weinstock,) by reason of Its own elemental constitution and character, able to fulfil to our sin- and death-stricken humanity all that this old name, now Self-appropriated, Self-applied, and so intensified by Christ, does actually promise in the way of His being this exclusively—the Root and Stem of a New humanity.

It is worth our while to press somewhat our inquiry into the *essential* nature of this *true* Vine—an inquiry that has to do directly with the peculiar constitution of Christ's person—just that, in fact, which makes the Gospel the one "power of God unto salvation" onward to the world's end. "It has been," observes a distinguished divine, "profoundly said, that the whole spiritual history of the world, and of every man in the world, revolves around two men, Adam and Christ, fitly therefore called the first Adam and the second; these being, so to speak, the two poles of humanity, the one the fountain of death to all, and the other the fountain of life, overcoming that death, to as many as will receive life of Him."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Trench's *Sermons*, p. 106.

The sin and sorrow, death and woe of the first Adam are ours. Children of a degenerate parent, we have by unity of life and community of nature, fallen under the power of his degeneracy. The head sinning and dying, the members sinned and died with the head. Very explicit is St. Paul's statement as to the corruption of our nature by the primal sin and its self-perpetuating power. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all sinned" (Rom. v. 12).

In that sublime ordeal, but terrific catastrophe, Adam stood not alone. He was the first man, not individually simply, but the first comprehensively. We stood with him, because we were *in* him. He was, in its deepest and widest sense, the representative man; not *a* man merely, but emphatically *the* man: the race generically; humanity, in its widest expansion in space, in its longest possible duration in time, across all the centuries, and with its strangest diversities. At that initial point, then, he was the bearer of more than a single individual life; he was mankind in its grand totality; and, therefore, was the ruin effected in and by him a truly organic ruin.

Says Augustine, "We were all *in* that one man when he, though being but one, corrupted all." Says a recent writer, "We are one with Adam not by mere

outward appointment only, by which his sin is constituted our sin, but by inward constitution, according to which Adam could beget a son only in his own corrupt image, that which is born of the flesh being necessarily flesh (St. John iii. 6). He was the root of humanity, between whom and the branches a connection subsisted of the most intimate nature, so that the corruption admitted into the stock by the one fatal act of Adam immediately and necessarily communicated itself to every branch connected with him. We are not therefore sinners only by imputation, but sin is a living, active principle inherent in the child, which shows its real existence, as soon as he becomes capable of any moral act.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Analytical Commentary on the Romans*, by John Forbes, LL.D., p. 218. “A whole world of alike separate personalities lay involved in Adam’s life, as a generic principle and root. And all these, in a deep sense, form at last but one and the same life. Adam lives in his posterity, as truly as he has ever lived in his own person. They participate in his whole nature, soul and body.” *The Mystical Presence*, by J. Williamson Nevin, D.D., LL.D., p. 161. Of course, the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, whose capricious and arbitrary dictum stands for truth, can form no conception of this generic character of Adam—the ruin of humanity in the ruin of its organic centre and unity. By a waive of smart rhetoric he would wipe out this lapse of the race in its primal headship. “It has been taught, in days gone by, that man sprang into a state of wrong by virtue of his connection with Adam, and that the whole race fell because Adam did. That is now repudiated. I repudiate it. I do not believe any such fabulous statement. The whole Adamic theory is a philosophical reason-



This beautiful allegory of the vine and its branches will help us to something like a right understanding of the power of such a generic life, in the way even of its general perversion and disastrous issue. No one need be told that the union between the vine and its branches is truly organic. There is here the power of a common life in which the top-most twig shares alike with the root and stem in which it stands. Connection here is not outward and mechanical, but inward and vital. They are parts of each other, and belong to each other. The vitality of one is the vitality of all. The root reveals itself in the stock; and "the nature of the stock is reproduced continually, with all its qualities, in every shoot that springs from its growth, no matter how far removed from the root."

This is the symbol of a far deeper truth. This prophecy of nature comes to actual fulfilment in the higher world of morals and the spirit. It is the "figure of the *true*"—the relation, first, that Adam sustains to our natural, fallen humanity; and then,

ing based on an allegory, and not on absolute history." Forsooth, because *he* repudiates the organic nature of the fall, the whole Christian world, it would seem, is bound to give it up; that it cannot stand a day longer when once *he* abjures it. From the adaptation of eternal verities to the variable theological thermometer of the Plymouth pulpit: "Good Lord, deliver us."

the relation that His believing people sustain to Christ, the Root and Stock of a new humanity. It is only a right conception of the first that will bring us to anything like a right conception also of the nature and necessity of the second. This idea of the race, a vast, comprehensive organism standing originally in the same generic headship, is essential to a right understanding, both of the terrific ruin in which it was involved by the sin of the first Adam, and of the full redemption brought in by the spotless life of the second Adam, Himself thoroughly human yet thoroughly Divine.

Undoubtedly this generic idea underlies the corresponding title St. Paul applies to Christ—"the last Adam" (I Cor. xv. 45), "the Second Man" (I Cor. xv. 47)—"the origin of a new order of existence for the human world as such." In fact, to answer its own broad purpose the Incarnation must be of a like generic comprehension and force. Only as redemption is thus first collective can it be of individual advantage and application in anything like a real way. According, then, to this old apostolic teacher, Christ realizes the idea of mankind in its universal conception.

Clearly this same generic thought lies at the bottom of this beautiful allegory, and the broad sweep of His own tremendous claim, when Christ is heard

here naming Himself the "True Vine," thus gathering up into Himself, and for their eternal redemption, all the "branches" of this diversified humanity. The old stock and root failed, carrying down all the branches in its own failure; but in Me, He would tell us, another Root and Stem are planted on the earth, and to every branch "abiding in Me," there shall be life eternal and joy to the full.

Planted on the earth! Yes; He is the VINE; the Tree of Life, and set in this great garden of the Lord, that we men may gather in its shade, eat of its precious fruit, live by its life, and never die; the rarest Plant of humanity, in a sense the Product of time and flesh. For, however else it is with this Vine, rooted it must be in the earth. Earth was the theatre, and man's own nature the sphere of a weak and miserable failure. Again, must the earth be the theatre, and man's own nature the sphere of a fresh probation and glorious victory. It all came in the order of the beings that sinned and fell, and not of beings of a different order. "He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the *seed* of Abraham." An essential element here is genuine humanity.

Of this essential element of Christ's person, this one title SON OF MAN, used about eighty-eight times in the Gospel, is most expressive. The *Son* of man

puts Him very close to us, puts Him on a common level with all other men; partaking of their nature, sharing their trials, meeting their temptations, bearing their burdens, touched by their sorrows, weeping their tears, and sinking at last into a common grave. This saying of the old Latin poet comes in Him to its truest, tenderest reality:

“I am a man; nought that is human deem I strange to Me;—”<sup>5</sup>

“wanting in no quality essential to manhood”; a common nature breaking down every distinction of race, refinement, and rank, and uniting Him by every bond of fellow feeling to all other men. A man; yes, and because a man, “nothing human” is to Him a matter of unconcern. Born to poverty and hardship, He is in living sympathy with the least and lowliest of mankind. It was the fling of petty, local spite, “Is not this the *carpenter’s* son?” but no possible slur or reproach. No, to His glory and for our good is it recorded, showing thorough identification with us under the burdens of our work and as well our warfare. It is

<sup>5</sup> Homo sum, et humani a me nil alienum puto.

—Terence.

The sentiment was received with tremendous applause when first uttered in a crowded Roman theatre.

“Every human heart is human.”

—Longfellow’s *Hawatha*.

a beautiful comment Canon Liddon makes on His own lament: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head"—remarking, it is "the fairest among the children of men, the natural Prince and Leader, the very prime and flower of human kind, whose lot is thus harder than that of the lower creatures, and in whose humiliation humanity itself is humbled below the level of its natural dignity."<sup>6</sup> A fellow feeling makes this Prince and Leader of mankind akin to all the world. He is the *Son* of man; and in the way of loving and living interest in our behalf, we cannot make too much account of the fact. Because of it and only because of it, "He can be *touched* with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. iv. 15). With every man of every age and nation He is in living sympathy.

But He is as well *the* Son of *Man*. With this emphasis, the title asserts His pre-eminence; puts Him on a higher plane than all other men; exalts

<sup>6</sup> *Our Lord's Divinity*, Bampton Lectures, 1866, p. 9. "Christ would not have adopted this title had He not been conscious of a complete participation in human nature. But His use of it would have been meaningless had He not had a right to it which other men could not possess. And consequently the meaning was a pregnant one, marking the distinctive differences between Him and other men." Schleiermacher, *Glaubenslehre*.

Him infinitely above us all as the absolute, the universal, the perfect, the pattern Man, the representative Head of the race, the Second Adam. He is not one among a thousand as good, and pure, and true as He; but, in its best and highest sense, we may say, the Non-such, the Ideal Man. All the world's aspirations, across the centuries, for the best, the highest type of man find in Him their perfect realization. Here is a human life after its Divine idea and plan. But all this was not in and for Himself alone. This Son of Man takes on a truly representative character. All the limitations of race and nationality fall away in Him. No narrow race-prejudices either cloud or circumscribe this world-embracing character. How well He has been called, "the Archetypal Man, in whose presence distinctions of race, interval of ages, types of civilization, degrees of mental culture are as nothing." He belonged to all ages; was mankind.

It is this broad conception of Christ's full redemptive relation to humanity, past, present, future, which comes out in St. Paul's grand word, "*gathering up*," rather re-heading (*ἀνακεφαλαιῶν*, Eph. i. 10), all things in heaven and earth, for a fresh beginning. Following right along in the line of this grand Apostle, Irenæus speaks of Christ "recapitulating" humanity—"commencing afresh in

Himself the long line of human beings, and, in a brief, comprehensive manner, furnishing us with salvation.”<sup>7</sup> Besides being this point of unity for our diverse humanity, He is as well the centre of all human history. The past, and more definitely as the centuries go on, stretches steadily up to Him, and finds all its mighty problems solved at last in His Advent, and its great burdens lightened and lifted. And from Him a grander future starts out for all the world—its impulse, its main spring, the living power back of all healthy social improvement, the Leader of everything like moral advance.

But can we say now that this was all? that in the root of His being there was nothing higher than this earthly origin and these earthly relations? Can we say now, that being the offspring of the earth, there was nothing in Him to show that He was quite as well the offspring of the skies? Can we say now that this poor village carpenter gave no sign of going beyond earth’s highest, loftiest position—ay, “Himself the King of kings, the Lord of lords?” Can we say now that this humble human form was the seat and shrine of nothing

<sup>7</sup> *Adv. Her.*, Book iii., 18, 1, Clark’s Ed. How strongly the Church Catechism puts this *generic* character of the great Redemption, when to the question: “What dost thou chiefly learn in these articles of thy Belief?” it makes answer: “Secondly, in God the Son who hath redeemed me, *and all mankind.*”

beyond the reach of mere natural powers and possibilities? Can we think now to deny here a Personal grandeur, a moral peerlessness, exceeding everything ever known in the world before, or for that matter since, forbidding His common classification with men? Can we say now that those thirty short and suffering years were the full measure of His days backward? And yet was He prophetically named, "The Ancient of Days," "The Father of the eternities." And with no sort of hesitation, and no thought of presumption, does He not Himself claim an existence antedating even that of Abraham? ay, more, laying hold of and appropriating to Himself, with the Name, the property alone of the Self-existent One? a Personal Being substantial and commensurate with the Almighty, ever-living God? "Before Abraham was I AM."

Of this essential element of Christ's Person, this other title, Son of God, though not in such frequent and familiar use as the former, is a direct and clear expression. Appropriated by Him without the slightest reserve or moral shock, with the utmost freeness and frankness confessed to Him, nor He timidly putting it away from Him, it is the one title that embodies in the most explicit way, the fact of a Divine, co-eternal Sonship. Thus Self-applied, He "thinks it no robbery," no



sacrilegious act, no violation either of truth, or propriety to put Himself on an "equality with God" (Phil. ii. 6). The position avowed by Him, deliberately accepted by Him (St. Mark xii. 37; St. Luke xx. 44; St. Matt. xvi. 16; St. John vi. 69),<sup>8</sup> asserted in the Gospel, time and again, condemned to death for not disclaiming it (St. John xix. 7; St. Mark xiv. 64; St. Matt. xxvi. 63-66), on the lips of the apostles, in the clear thought of the early disciples, "preached unto the Gentiles," formulated in all the creeds, following down all the centuries,—the one plain, unequivocal, self-consistent position is this: Jesus Christ, truly and perfectly man, yet very God.

Thus uniquely constituted—SON OF MAN, yet SON OF GOD—Christ has ground for this Personal claim, "I AM the true Vine—the generic Root and Principle of a new humanity. Of Himself *personally* He says it. It is Himself He puts forward as comprehending all the powers of human salvation onward to the end of the world.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Christ puts in no disclaimer to St. Thomas's glowing Confession, "My Lord and my God" (St. John xx. 28)! Does the confession mean all it says? Was it a delusion? Can it be said, that He wittingly sanctioned the delusion? Rather, is not the quiet acceptance of the title and homage invincible proof of Self-conscious Divinity?

<sup>9</sup> "It was a peculiar and transcendent consciousness that could be expressed in the titles 'Son of God' and 'Son of Man'; and

He says it not of His Church separately taken. By Browne the metaphor is directly referred to the Church as more fully corresponding with that which the vine anciently symbolized. In his view the reference is not merely nor chiefly to Christ, individually considered, but His Church. "My Church is like the vine, a living, wide-spreading, fruit-bearing thing."<sup>10</sup> In this, He clearly misses the full significance of this tremendous I AM. To dead humanity the Church, separately considered, is not life giving. It does but mediate the Life alone saving: the bark through which the vital current flows. It can, then, only be used of the Church relatively, as, by the Presence of its Ever-living Head, and its own divine constitution, the sole order of grace in the world, the one medium of salvation, age after age, and furnishing through its appointed ordinances, an opportunity ever at hand of actual union and communion with the Life of the one, true Vine—first by Baptismal ingrafting, and, then, by the Holy Eucharist, the Sacrament of inhabi-

He who so conceived Himself showed He had a mission worthy of His transcendent Personality. . . . While He is the least self-conscious of teachers, He is of all teachers the most conscious of Himself; while the least egotistical, the most concerned with His own Person. He conceived His person to be a supreme necessity to the world." Fairbairn, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, p. 194.

<sup>10</sup> *Sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Vol. II., p. 383.

tation—Christ dwelling in believers, and they in Him.<sup>11</sup>

They do then come far short of His deep meaning who take His word, "*abide in Me*," as indicating only and purely a moral union—oneness of sentiment, thought, opinion, feeling. This it is, and a great deal more. The strength of affection which bound the heart of Jonathan to David gives no illustration and parallel. Mere friendship, personal endearment, party enthusiasm, the prestige of a name, the power of leadership, similarity of views, the sympathy of common pursuits and interests, drawing men to each other, fall short of the life-union expressed by the Divine word, and the natural analogy here employed. To make it stand in intellectual accord—the relation of teacher and pupil, philosopher and scholar—meets, neither the measure of the tremendous claim, nor the spiritual necessities of the case. Though the great master shaped the thinking of the greater scholar, yet the relation of Socrates and Plato furnishes no parallel to the union of Christ and believers. Reciprocity of thought gives, of necessity, no reciprocity of purpose, action, being.

"It is not to be disputed," says Tholuck, "that a higher relation is here exhibited than that of master and disciple, nothing less in fact than a real oneness,

<sup>11</sup> Communion Office in Prayer Book.

effected through the medium of faith." But faith, be it understood, is not the formal acceptance of Christian doctrine, the recitation of the Creed with more or less intellectual clearness, or belief, however full and hearty, in the naked word of Scripture. Faith is an inward movement: a man, from the deepest centre of his being, committing himself to Christ and a life to correspond. Faith is a truly responsive act; rather a life-long series of acts—what the great apostle styles, "the *obedience* of faith."

The Church is the divine organ and medium of union and communion with Christ. The initial Sacrament is Holy Baptism; the instrument of *regeneration*, using the word in the sense of the Prayer-Book and ancient writers. With that the life in Christ begins. Thus, the very imagery of the text—a branch taken away from the old stem and effectually *grafted* in upon the New Stock.

Holy Baptism is only the good beginning. All life needs care, attention, nourishment. In due time the Holy Eucharist follows. Abiding in Christ points to the cultivation of every spiritual virtue in the faithful use of appointed means of grace. To stand, day by day, in the Communion of the Church, living by the life of the Vine, eating of Its fruit, drinking of Its wine, with every breath of this new life unto God taking in spiritual vigor and health, from all

the aids provided, ay, even from hard but holy discipline drawing fresh courage for fresh trials, fresh inspiration for fresh duties,—this is appointed unto us by the Divine Husbandman. “He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.”

“O loving wisdom of our God !  
When all was sin and shame,  
A second Adam to the fight  
And to the rescue came.

“O wisest love ! that flesh and blood,  
Which did in Adam fail,  
Should strive afresh against the foe,  
Should strive and should prevail.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Newman, *Dream of Gerontius*.



VIII.

The Personal Rest of the Weary.

“Art thou weary, art thou languid,  
Art thou sore distress’d?  
‘Come to Me,’ saith One, ‘and coming,  
Be at rest.’

“Finding, following, keeping, struggling,  
Is He sure to bless?  
‘Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs,  
Answer, Yes.’”



## VIII.

### The Personal Rest of the Weary.

*"Come unto ME all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*—ST. MATT. XI. 28.

THINK of such a challenge on the lips of prophet or apostle, each bearing his own burden of sin and sorrow! Think of the rough and rugged Prophet of the wilderness following up his bold cry: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," with this strange tender of himself: Come unto me, and I will give you pardon, peace, rest! Think of any mortal man, the holiest and best—the paragon of beings on earth—thus holding up himself to others wearied no more than he with the "burden and heat of the day," himself laden with sin and guilt, as the absolute Source of comfort and help, and this the more effectually in being the only one on earth able to remove sin, the one bitter root of human misery and woe! Think of Socrates, placing himself at this centre of all earth's woes, and proclaiming himself to

burdened souls down the ages as not only able, but alone able to lighten and lift their sorrows with their sins!<sup>1</sup>

Put in this form, the thought serves to bring into the clear light of day one of two things: either the absurdity and effrontery of the challenge on Christ's own lips, or, the utter impossibility of classing Him with other men, putting Him on the level simply of our common humanity. What monstrous pretension, if this only—nothing other and higher! The world could only stand dazed in the presence of arrogance and conceit of such blasphemous character, if, claiming the office of God, to whom “only it appertaineth to forgive sin,” there be in Him *personally* nothing to warrant and make good these gracious words, dropping from His lips like honey

<sup>1</sup> “Suppose for one moment the following expressions to have been put into the mouth of Socrates,—‘I, if I drink the cup of hemlock, will draw all men unto me.’ ‘Come to Socrates all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and he will give you rest.’ ‘Take his yoke upon you and learn of him, for he is meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for his yoke is easy and his burden is light.’ Applied to Socrates such expressions are ridiculous; applied to Jesus Christ they are a mighty power. Would any follower have dared to apply them to Sakya Muni, or Confucius, or Mahomet? Would not Moses have rejected them with horror? Yet there is that in Jesus Christ which makes them fit with propriety. Why is this? The only possible answer is, there is something in Him which belongs to Him alone, a worthiness that is absolutely Divine.” *Reasons for Believing Christianity*, by Prebendary Row, pp. 58, 60.

for bruised hearts. Cruelty of no ordinary kind, to make to hope so fair a promise only to break it in the hour of bitterest agony! How like the going down of the sun is the extinction of so great hope!

But if these be words of profoundest reality and truth, who is He, who thus dares to single Himself out from the whole world of mankind, past, present, and future—the best and greatest of every age and all ages—and, so confidently, so exclusively, fix on Himself the eyes and hearts of all men, across all the centuries, saying to one and all, whatever their sorrow, and whatever their sin? “Come unto ME, I will give you rest.” Had He stood on the level simply with men, He should have differed from them in nothing save the colossal boldness of this broad challenge—audacious and offensive in the extreme. We cannot yield it, however, that it is but the vain and empty mockery of human woe. We cannot yield it that these words, though “smoother than oil, are yet very swords.” In this stupendous Ego we recognize the infinitude of Deityship—the mystery carried till then in the womb of time (Col. i. 26). “Heaven it is pouring out its compassionate yearnings over earth, and stretching down to it the helping hand of infinite love and power.”

Thus, it is a word of hope and help, of sympathy and succor to every soul this suffering world over:

may, not *a* word, something spoken merely, a voice, but emphatically and exclusively "*the Word*," standing, by virtue of the Incarnation, in living sympathy and power among us. For, in His Divine-human character, He, *personally*, claims to be man's only Help and Hope in the universal misery of his present condition.

Universal misery! In His "*all ye that labor and are heavy laden*," Christ expresses the general lot of mankind. From some cause affecting all, our present life is seen to be everywhere grieved and wearied with its sorrowful burden. Drawing imagery and inspiration from scenes immediately at hand, as was His wont, He speaks in this connection of a "yoke." Doubtless, this was suggested by the rude agriculture of the time and country. In Oriental simplicity the cultivation of land was by oxen heavily yoked together. While He spoke, this operation, probably, stood out before the eye of Christ—oxen with their heavy yokes, tired and well-nigh exhausted, dragging the rude and cumbrous plow. To His eye as it swept the ever-widening circle of the ages, this was the picture of a sadder spectacle in the moral world—humanity everywhere bending under its heavier yoke of sin and shame, suffering and sorrow.

In the case of every one, to a greater or less degree, this picture is a bitter reality. Be the position and

circumstances in life what they may, there is exemption from sorrow to none. Long ago, with what truth it was said, "Every heart knoweth its own bitterness." An aching heart there is in every human breast. If not after one sort, then after another, a weight of sorrow presses down every soul. Even where one might expect to find the largest degree of freedom from anxiety and trouble, there are not seldom the heaviest hearts,—luxurious comforts, in the way of contrast, only making the anguish all the keener. A thousand times rather confidence and love in the simplest home, than a palatial edifice with corresponding appointments, and coldness, estrangement, distrust withal. On this lovely earth there are millions to whom life, from this one cause, and from day to day, is itself a bitterness and burden. Misery with splendor! That it is. One alone knows the sorrow surging through human souls.

Nor, though the home be never so bright and happy, is it free from the intrusion of sickness and death.

"There is no flock, however watch'd and tended,  
But one dead lamb is there !  
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,  
But has one vacant chair."

From this sweet home has gone forth a son in the flush of early manhood, from that the fair bride ere

the orange blossoms have faded; from that the grand figure which stood for long years its pillar and support. The oldest of known writers thus expresses the universality of affliction, "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward"; and from the agonized soul is wrung the bitter exclamation: "I would not live alway" (Job v. 7; vii. 16), which an American divine has thus immortalized:

"I would not live alway: I ask not to stay,  
Where storm after storm rises dark o'er the way;  
Where seeking for rest we but hover around,  
Like the patriarch's bird, and no resting is found."

Besides, temporal calamities cast dark shadows on the sunniest life. Trusted friends deceive. Fortunes disappear. The mountain which a man fondly dreamed secure and strong is scattered, as it were, with a breath. "The wind passeth over it, and it is gone." The wealth a man spent years of honest toil in amassing, and thought laid up in solid investments, vanishes as in a night. How often sorrowful proof comes of the utter vanity of our common expectations in this very direction—in the way of cruel deception or bitter disappointment showing the need of an absolute and abiding Rest, some sure Hope and Dependence not affected in the slightest by "the changes and chances of this mortal life." What, amid the

shifting sands of the desert, driven by the fierce Sirocco, the weary traveller wants, what will best serve him in his imperilled state, is the shadow and rest of a great Rock where he may hide himself.

Now, "in these most comfortable words," so characterized in the office for Holy Communion, Christ puts Himself forward as man's only satisfying and abiding portion amid the cares, troubles, disappointments of life, come whence and how they may. In this broad and comprehensive sense this universal challenge is to be taken. It is addressed to suffering mortals of every sort. Looking over the world of mankind, everywhere sorrowing and burdened, reaching after happiness, but finding it in no earthly conditions or relations, and arrogating to Himself the sole prerogative of God as fully indicated in the old question and answer: "Who will show us any good? LORD, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us" (Ps. iv. 6), Christ offers Himself, not in the way of mere verbal sympathy, but as the absolute, personal Source of all true and solid comfort—"Come unto ME, I will give you rest."

Even in this direction, what moral grandeur is His! How quietly, yet how confidently, He calls all mankind away from their toil and hardship to His side. He puts Himself in opposition to the world under its best form, and claims to be of more account

than all its honors, riches, pleasures; and His language is a direct challenge to men to turn away from all the things in which their good is thought to lie.

If the language rested in no consciousness of Divine being and powers then was it in the highest degree presumptuous, and the Christ of the Gospel stands before the world as an unmitigated fraud (St. John vii. 12)—deceiving the people.

All this, however, is but the smallest fraction of the misery of our present state. In these manifold branchlets of woe we have not begun to touch the bitter root in which they all stand. Public calamities, social distress, personal disappointment, private grief, family sorrow, bodily disturbance and final disorganization, disease terminating in death—"the fortunes of the body following the fortunes of the soul"—all alike come from one and the same evil source. "By one man sin entered into the world, and *death* by sin."

Sin is at the bottom of it all. A monosyllabic word, but responsible for all human woe! Coming to be the world's Saviour from the power and penalty of sin, this challenge is addressed to men as *sinner*s. The burden is first inward. It is a heavy load of conscious guilt—deep distress of soul because of sorrowful estrangement from God in whose will and pleasure our whole being stands. As surely as a man's shadow follows when he walks in the sunlight, so this



sense of sin tracks his steps and tears his soul. Lashed by a guilty mind, the great English dramatist makes his Richard III. exclaim in self-accusation and disgust:

“I hate myself,  
For hateful deeds committed by myself.  
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues  
And every tongue brings in a several tale,  
And every tale condemns me for a villain.”<sup>2</sup>

And it is a Christian apostle who thus pours out his intense sense of sin: “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!”

The horror of great darkness fell on Augustine when once he came to see his guilt and need of a Saviour. His “Confessions” bear testimony to acute mental anguish, and inward conflicts long and terrible. On one occasion, in a retired spot of the garden, he threw himself down upon the earth, and gave vent in tears and words to his agony: “Thou, my Lord, how long yet? O Lord, how long yet wilt Thou be angry? Remember not the sins of my youth! How long? how long? To-morrow, and again, to-morrow? Why not to-day? Why not now? Why not this hour put an end to my shame?”<sup>3</sup> Such for him were the bitter birth-pangs of the new life.

<sup>2</sup> *King Richard III.*, Act V., Scene 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Confessions*, viii. 12.

Christian hymnology abounds in the fullest expression of this intense sense of sin. Take these familiar lines as a specimen.

“Thy promise is my only plea,  
With this I venture nigh;  
Thou callest burden’d souls to Thee,  
And such, O Lord, am I.

“Bow’d down beneath a load of sin,  
By Satan sorely press’d,  
By war without, and fear within,  
I come to Thee for rest.”

O, on this fair earth, where the Saviour lived and labored, suffered and died, there are few, indeed, who do not feel that “sin is the burden of all their burdens.” Felt experience finds for itself true and full utterance in this Confessional Prayer: “We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable.”<sup>4</sup>

And the deeper this sense of personal sinfulness, deeper always the *need* of a Personal Redeemer! A guilty conscience makes no want more felt than that of a Person, able and ready, to bear its burden. Just here it is, dragging our life along under this load of sin, where the gracious challenge of this Divine

<sup>4</sup> *Book of Common Prayer, Office for Holy Communion.*

Speaker meets us. Himself He presents as the adequate and absolute Saviour. What tremendous dignity, honor, power He assumes! None other, indeed, than God's sole prerogative! "Who can forgive sins, but God only" (St. Mark ii. 7)? Whatever the original motive or purpose of the question, it sprang, doubtless, from an inherent and irresistible conviction that it belonged to the incommunicable powers of God. So the Lenten Collect: "O most mighty God, Thy property is always to have mercy; to Thee only it appertaineth to forgive sin."<sup>5</sup>

Then, by what right does Jesus claim it? This much we know, that when on earth He hesitated neither to claim nor exercise it, saying to this penitent soul and that one: "Thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace." And we know it fell like a thunderbolt on Jewish ears. It was a tremendous shock to the oldest and deepest religious sense that had taken possession of the human soul. And no wonder. It sounded to such ears verily as blasphemy. Hence the quick objection of outraged faith and feeling: "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies?" However, the power is asserted. And if nothing of essential Divinity were back of that human appearance and form, what was He other than these Pharisees, shocked beyond measure, styled Him, a blasphemer

<sup>5</sup> *Prayer-Book*, Ash-Wednesday service.

—an impious pretender. Nevertheless, in the face of all this disturbed Jewish propriety His “power on earth to forgive sins” is vindicated and exemplified.

Living instances of its direct exercise are more a thousand-fold than the abstract claim ever could be. A touching incident from real life stands in close connection with the discourse ending with this golden invitation, as given by St. Luke. Somewhere, somehow, a woman, singled out from others by this opprobrious emphasis—“which was a *sinner*”—had heard this challenge, full of hope even to her, as to others. Sin had been her pursuit and her shame—the wretched root of a most wretched life. This weary one—how weary God only knew—makes resolve to seek the Rest of the weary, and, at His feet, in tears and grief, pour into His ears the penitent story of her errant ways. Nor is she spurned from His presence, as the supercilious host dared to think. “Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace,” was His Divine word, lifting up the bowed soul, and planting henceforth willing feet in the path of the new life.

“She sat and wept beside His feet; the weight  
Of sin oppressed her breast; for all the blame,  
And the poor malice of the worldly shame,  
To her were past, extinct, and out of date;

Only the sin remained—the leprous state.  
She would be melted by the heat of love,  
By fires far fiercer than are blown to prove  
And purge the silver ore adulterate.  
She sat and wept, and with her untressed hair,  
Still wiped the feet she was so blessed to touch;  
And He wiped off the soiling of despair  
From her sweet soul, because she loved so much.”<sup>6</sup>

Before a proud and haughty Pharisee, in his house, as his Guest, Christ did assume to forgive this wretched woman, and send her away with that peace in her soul “which the world cannot give”—“the peace of God which passeth all understanding.” Could mortal man have spoken these words? Either, then, the audacious blasphemer these startled Jews thought Him, or the Divine-human Saviour the Holy Gospel represents and presents. Between these alternatives there is really no standing-ground.

Granting now this tremendous claim, the question arises: How is present compliance with this challenge practicable? In no literal sense certainly, and yet in a very real way. In outward, visible form Christ stood before the listening multitude when He gave this hope-inspiring invitation. Mortal beings, with the heaviest load of guilt on their

<sup>6</sup> *Hartley Coleridge*. Quoted by Canon Farrar in his *Life of Christ*, Vol. I., p. 303.

conscience, could go to Him, through any rain of tears look up into His compassionating eye; in broken speech tell into His ear their sad tale of sin, and shame, and sorrow; and catch and for ever carry away with them the sweet and strong accents of His Personal absolution: "Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more."

Is all this impossible now? Are the ages since left with no answering Reality? Against his own solemn word, has Christ left us orphans (*ὀρφανούς*, St. John xiv. 18)—without true and abiding assurance of the Father's love and favor, without the sense of adoption and sonship? On our earth is there no voice of authority in His name, to speak into penitent ears the assurance of pardon and peace? In a word, is there no way, quite as real as when He walked the earth, and received sinners, and bade them live and sin no more, by which we may come to Him, confessing our sins and getting His absolving word?

Then, when He left the world and was taken again into heaven, the Gospel came to an abrupt and inglorious end. Then, we of this day, "dead in trespasses and sins," are left "without hope in the world." Then, oppressed with guilt, all in vain it is that we cry:

"O that my load of sin were gone!"

Then, longing for rest, yet are we driven, in utter weariness of spirit, either to dismal despair or stolid indifference.

The Christ of the blessed Gospel has not thus left Himself without an adequate and abiding Witness in the earth. His Kingdom is a divine reality, with actual powers to make His own mission effective even to the world's end. His words are no mockery: "Lo, I AM with you alway, even to the end of the world." They have come to perpetual and world-wide potency in an outward, visible, historic organization, where His Presence is specially vouchsafed, His commands obeyed, His Sacraments observed, His grace communicated, His pardon sealed, His voice heard in glad assurances of peace and comfort. Thus, in close proximity to, and full historic connection with, His glorious resurrection and ascension, stand these subsequent Christian facts—the mission of the Holy Ghost, the establishment of the Church, its duly authorized ministry, its Sacramental Offices, its institutions of grace, making always at hand the one Power that saves, and a help everywhere and to all who, in good earnest, will lay hold upon it, and "even unto the uttermost."

This is pre-eminently an age of *sentiment*. In the sphere of religion, "the Gospel of gush"—emotionalism, pure and simple—is a staple commodity. It is

no slander to say this. It is the prevailing characteristic. The methods widely resorted to show this. Institutional religion is at a discount. More confidence, it would seem, is placed in fanatical measures than the ordinances of divine appointment. For instance, what changes are rung by undoubtedly earnest and candid men on the stirring appeal, "Come to Jesus," without so much as indicating *how* one is to come to Him, or *where* one may find Him in deepest reality. How perfectly useless all this is! How deceptive! Nothing but sound! Putting aside all such vapid sentiment as the sheerest cant, let us try to get at something like definite and satisfactory action. Spiritual abstractions above all are empty and hollow.

"Come unto ME!" Put the emphasis on the pronoun. There it belongs. This marks indeed, the unique style Christ is ever employing. Habitually He makes Himself the central figure in His discourses. It is ever "I" and "ME." In the whole range of history, no speaker, no teacher of morality, no philosopher—Socrates, Plato, Aristotle of the ancient, or Bacon and Kant of the modern, world—was ever so presumptuous. "Follow Me"; "Believe in Me"; "Depart from Me"; "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me"; "By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved"; "He shall testify of Me"; "Do



this in remembrance of Me;" "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out"; "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me"; "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." And so one might fill up page after page. These are but a few of the ever-recurring phrases. It is Christ's own peculiar style. How profoundly significant the fact! Here is no transient theophany, no Gnostic phantom and dream, no idle conceit, no figment of the imagination. But a veritable Person to whom we are to come; and as much now as when in outward visible form He stood among men, and walked the earth, and invited penitent souls to Himself: a veritable Person giving to His word definiteness of action, and to His work atoning efficacy across the ages.

Now as then, this coming to Christ is by an inward and outward movement—definite action in a definite way. Private judgment is not to rule in so grave a matter. Salvation is not by every man's *own* way—by a given set of experiences, by ecstatic feelings, the product and by-play of religious excitement, by wild emotion, whether of grief or joy, too often expending itself altogether in frenzied expressions—but by God's way; by a Divine order and course. By His transcendent authority and act, the Church with its sacramental Order and Offices is made to intervene.

We recognize the Church as, by Divine Act, the one organ and medium of salvation onward to the millennial period and glory. Here are the positive institutions of grace—themselves supernatural powers since springing from a supernatural Source—the Bath of the New Birth (λουτρού παλιγγενεσίας—Titus iii. 5), the water of Holy Baptism for the washing away of sin; the Sacrament of union with Christ, and of spiritual nourishment; the sign and seal of the real though invisible Presence of the ever-living Lord; the life-giving power of the Spirit; the comfortable assurance of pardon: the means of grace—divine helps for human need—the chance of heaven and refreshment by the way for weary pilgrims—in a word, here the spiritual life which at last finds its true issue and glorious consummation in the life everlasting. Thus, as the Divine and sole organ of salvation, the Church is an object of faith and obedient appropriation full as much as the Incarnation itself, taking its place in the Creed along with verities of alike supernatural order.

Its powers are not original. It is but a voice: “the *declaration* of absolution, or remission of sins”—pure and simple. The authority to make it stands in a Personal Power back of it, absolute and adequate, as its eternal Root and Ground. One, indeed, “*exalted to the right hand of God*,” is and for ever remains,

"*the* Prince and Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins." In that wonderful Ascension-act, this power, however, did not disappear from the earth—vanish, as it were, into thin smoke and nothingness. It abides, as something of actual present need and force.

What was and ever remains in Christ, absolutely and personally, is in the Church officially and administratively, by the Spirit, to the same end and purpose. Here is nothing problematic or hypothetical. Its act and voice of absolution are authoritative. It is as though Christ Himself did pronounce it. The Power of the Keys is in human hands. Hence the awful significance of this high Commission: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Therefore it is, that the minister of the Church, standing in his holy place and carrying out his God-given office, applies, "to the washing away of sin" (Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16), the water of Holy Baptism. Therefore it is, that the minister of the Church, standing in his holy place and carrying out his God-given office, says to every penitent and believing soul, with present effect and power: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Therefore it is, that "the declaration of absolution," standing in its appointed place in the service, is an office of real comfort and power,

not empty sound and mockery. And therefore it is, that, in exceptional cases and under exceptional circumstances, private provision is made to the same end, when, for "quieting the conscience," guarded opportunity is accorded in the Communion Office "for godly counsel and advice"—of comfort and help, doubtless, as a voluntary act, suiting a given emergency. The Church's *principle* of action, it must be said, differs fundamentally from the Romish *practice*. Private confession and absolution are neither recommended nor encouraged, much less insisted upon as a stated and habitual thing, but simply allowed in spiritual exigencies, as the physician's art, as medicine in sickness, not the pabulum of the soul: the *exception*, not the *rule*.

Faith is implicit and explicit—has its passive and active side: Christian trust and Christian energy: a "believing in Christ," and a "coming to Christ." Resting in Him as its object and ground, it *moves* to readiest compliance with His commands: self-commitment to a course of life and action answering in full to the inward sense and spirit. Hence the apostle's significant phrase: "the *obedience* of faith"—a diligent use of the means of grace in order to personal and eternal salvation. Through the Church we come to Christ. Independence of His ways and means is simply to show one's self infidel at heart.

Our natural existence gives us the law of the new creation. Ends are always dependent on means. No man can fold his hands, and sit down in inglorious ease. With the noise of a thousand industries falling on his ears and calling him to work, he must find employment and the means of livelihood. Indolence goes to the wall. None may despise and repudiate this priesthood of labor. To repudiate the priestly intervention of His Church, what is it but the repudiation of Christ its Head and Founder?\*

This outward movement must itself rest on an impelling force back of it—the deep sense of a man's own spiritual need; a movement from within, from the profound depths of a man's interior life. Thought, self-reflection, a full sense of the utter vanity of the world in satisfying the immortal spirit—these are first and necessary steps in a man's coming to Christ. To have made proof of the world's

\* Victorinus, the intimate friend of Augustine, a learned teacher of oratory at Rome, and translator of the Platonic writings, at the sacrifice of great worldly gain, embraced Christianity. For a long time he thought he could be a good Christian without union with the Church. Simplicianus, a venerable priest, grown gray in the service of the Master, gave him a better understanding of the truth and personal duty in the case by this straightforward reply: "I will not count you a *Christian* before I see you in the Church of Christ." His language plainly meant union with the visible Church in order to a life-union and communion with Christ.

emptiness will prepare him to embrace the fulness of Christ. The Prodigal's destitution was the soul's hunger-cry: the hour of bitterness wherein was born, with the thought of home, and happiness, and forfeited love, the noble resolve: "I will arise, and go to my Father": the end of self-dissatisfaction and unrest, the beginning of true joy in the re-establishment of right relations in a right life.

Such serious reflection shapes itself into corresponding, honest action: the "repent" becoming the "I believe"; the "I believe" leading to the "I will"—manly action suiting the manly purpose. With the soul making any thing like earnest with the matter of personal salvation, its "I renounce the world" is its prompt "I come to Thee, O Christ"—one breath, one act, one movement: the end of disquietude, of distress, of dread; the soul at peace in its peace with God.

Nor is this all. There is given here a sublime and faultless life for every Christian man to make his pattern and rule. This holy example—free from sin in the midst of sin—is for our inspiration and imitation. Said the apostle, "We have the *mind* of Christ." To have His mind is to imbibe His spirit, accept His ideas, adopt His methods, act out His principles, give His pure, and sweet, and spotless life the force of law—heed His personal challenge:

"LEARN OF ME."

The Rest promised takes in "the life that now is, and that which is to come." Here, it is the feeling of relief experienced upon the removal of the burden of sin, the restoration of right relations to God; and the peace of mind flowing from this sense of harmony. Everything wears a truer and brighter aspect in this swell of new joy. All life assumes a fresh and holy charm. Love lends wings to all duties. Coming out of darkness, the soul enters into God's light, "that peace, which the world cannot give."

Rest here below is only partial. Our highest joys are mingled with sorrows. Only in the beatific state is the promise made complete. There is fullness of joy; there are pleasures for evermore. There the life of penitence, and faith, and holiness comes to its "perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in God's eternal and everlasting glory." There the faithful are ever "before the throne of God"; from their eyes all tears shall be wiped away; all sorrows will have come to an end.

"THERE REMAINETH THEREFORE A REST TO THE  
PEOPLE OF GOD."

From this sense and burden of sin, by His infinite condescension, by the merit of His unstained life, by His cross and passion, by His atoning death, by

His victory over this "last enemy," and by His Personal return "opening the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers," One is our only Refuge and Hope.

"O let my heart no further roam,  
'Tis Thine by vows, and hopes, and fears long since  
O call Thy wanderer home, to that dear home,  
Safe in Thy wounded side,  
Where only broken hearts their sin and shame may hide."



IX.

The One Source and Support of Spiritual Life.

“God Incarnate, bread He maketh  
By His word His flesh to be;  
Who by faith that cup partaketh  
Tastes the blood of Calvary:  
Though the carnal sense forsaketh,  
Faith beholds the Mystery.”

*(Pange, lingua, gloriosi corporis mysterium.)*

Aquinas, 1224.

## IX.

### The One Source and Support of Spiritual Life.

*"I AM the Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me sha'll never thirst. I AM the Living Bread which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the Life of the world."*—ST. JOHN VI. 35, 51.

MAN is the meeting-point of two worlds; the connecting link between heaven and earth—for each might claim him for its own. The offspring of the earth and yet the child of the Eternal, in him the highest dignity and the humblest origin unite. By his spirit related to God, and by his body to the ground, he is neither bodiless angel nor yet soulless animal, but a spirit-embodied being.

The oldest name given to man bears testimony to his earthly relation. All Hebraists agree in saying that the term Adam (אָדָם) has unmistakable reference to the ground from which he was formed. By nature and corresponding name he was rooted

to the earth. But not all of earth.<sup>1</sup> The physical form is the shrine and seat of an intelligent and moral nature after its Divine pattern and archetype; in which alone like unto God he is most unlike every thing in the earth beside. The "earthen vessel is the depository of a heavenly treasure: casket of an immortal jewel.

Nearer to the Divine side and the great truth stands the old Greek name for man, *ὁ ἄνθρωπος* from *ὁ ἄνω ἄνθρωπος*<sup>2</sup>—the *up-looking one*. In his erect form, and his eye set aloft, and his soul stirred by high aspiration, they dimly saw in man a kinship to the gods, a destiny linked, somehow, to the skies.

<sup>1</sup> Maimonides suggests a co-operation of God and nature in man's creation—"God directly and sovereignly, nature mediately and obediently through the divine word. From the one comes his body, his physical, from the other his diviner life and image." He says, "in regard to the lower animal and vegetable life, the language was, 'let the earth bring forth'; but in respect to man it is changed to, 'let us make man,' that is to say, 'I and the earth,'—let the latter bring forth his body from the earthly elements, even as it did in the case of the lower things that preceded him." In regard to this strange suggestion, Tayler Lewis says, "If we depart at all from the patristic view of an allusion to a plurality of idea in the Deity, the next best is that of Maimonides." Lange's *Comm. on Genesis*, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Psychology*, p. 82. Also Max Müller: "Man is *ὁ ἄνω ἄνθρωπος*, he who looks upwards, and certain it is that what makes man man, is that he alone can turn his face to heaven." *Lectures on the Science of Religion*, p. 18.

How completely was embodied in a single word this thought, that, in the deepest powers of his nature and the last sense and scope of his being, man is from God and for God. It may well be that this profound significance of the name was not fully present to the Greek mind. Nevertheless, there lies in it a fine grasp of the dignity of man's nature,—the impassable gulf that separates him from the brutal orders below him. Thus some English poet brings out this fine sense of the old Greek word for man:

“While the mute creation downward bend  
Their gaze, and to their earthly mother tend,  
Man looks aloft, and with erected eyes  
Beholds his own hereditary skies.”

And in that sublime ode, “Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of early Childhood,” Wordsworth wrote, “Heaven lies about us in our infancy,” for,

“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home.”

Yet how is man everywhere contradicting this mute prophecy in his upright form of the highest being and destiny. Made with an up-turned look and longing, yet how low and grovelling generally his tastes, his aims and interests. What coarse delights consume his substance! What sorrowful merchandise of a heavenly birthright for gains he cannot carry with him! The thoughtful man lives not, whose own sense even of his dignity, duty, destiny is attained in political eminence, in professional distinction, in merely worldly success in any direction and to any degree. In vain every effort to make the earth do what it is utterly incompetent for—meet the hunger and thirst of an immortal soul! “Whosoever drinketh of *this* water shall thirst again.”

“The eternal will the eternal seek;  
Its thirst in life’s pure stream will slake,  
Which clear as crystal ever wells  
From under the throne where Jesus dwells.”

In the opening sentence of this memorable discourse, Christ exhorts: “Labor not for the meat that perisheth”—administering a just rebuke to that life which, trailing like low vines along the ground, comes short of its eternal purpose and end. It was only a carnal motive—the satisfaction of the desires of their lower nature—that brought this crowd of peo-

ple across the sea to Capernaum. Only the day before, they had been the witnesses and beneficiaries of the miraculous multiplication of a few loaves and fishes into a supply more than sufficient for five thousand persons. Divining their motive, He tells them: "Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." It was, then, for indolent satisfaction; as Lange well observes, "not because His feeding of them was a sign, but because that sign had been a *feeding*"—<sup>3</sup> too ready to be His followers, could they only be daily fed with food supplied them. And then, as on a former occasion (St. John iv. 15), He connects with the *material* element they came seeking a *spiritual* of which they had too little thought and concern. How uniform this custom of selecting, "as most striking types of spiritual things, the commonest necessities of our daily life."

<sup>3</sup> *Life of Christ*, Vol. III., p. 144. "Not because ye perceive that the satisfying of the hunger of the body was an intelligible parable of the satisfying of the hunger of the soul—but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled: because you looked to me to satisfy mere bodily, earthly, temporal wants: because you brought down the meaning of that one typical work to the level of your own dull souls instead of using it as a help towards loftier efforts: because you still rest in the outward, the sensuous, the transitory, all which I am come to reveal in their true character as symbols, pledges, sacraments of things spiritual and eternal. You seek something *from Me* but if you knew the gift of God, you would seek *Me*: *I AM the Bread of Life*." Westcott, *The Revelation of the Father*, p. 33.

To the woman of Samaria, He speaks of "*living water*"; to these carnal Galileans of "*living Bread*." He uses the bread of earth they were after to tell them of the Bread of heaven they were not after; ay, more, to put Himself forward as "*the Bread which came down from Heaven*"—the Principle and Power of eternal life. From the hunger which common food supplies He leads their thoughts naturally to the spiritual need for which the world has nothing adequate, centring their thoughts and of mankind through all the centuries on His personal sufficiency: "*I AM the Bread of Life.*"

What wonderful words to come from a man, if, indeed, He be nothing other than a man! What does He mean? All life requires the means of support—spiritual, not less than natural. Bread is necessary and universal food. We cannot do without it. It must find its way into the humblest cottage even as into royal courts. Pauper and king alike need it and crave it. Many things we may put away from our table,—luxuries we may be without means to buy; but we cannot give up the staff of life. And while there is nothing to take its place, and we wish for nothing to take its place, we do never grow tired of it. We have it at every meal; and go on eating it all our lives. It stands as nothing else for the *principle* of bodily sustenance. It is vigor to the



body, health to the blood. Without it weakness comes; disease and death come. In the strength thereof "man goeth forth to his work and to his labor until the evening." How, then, with thankfulness should we receive "our *daily* bread."

But to be all this—health, quickened vitality, renewed strength—bread must, in the way of actual participation, enter into and become a part of the physical system. No pictures of food, no dreams of rich viands, no sight of a well-filled table, will help a hungry man in the least. A mighty craving tells him, that what he needs to do is to stretch forth his hand and appropriate the food right at hand, building up the body, repairing its wasted energies, and making it strong.

Just here we touch the profound sense and purpose of this difficult passage; universally acknowledged to be such, from the earliest, down to the latest and most learned, Biblical scholars. One thing is plain—Christ's exhibition of Himself as the one Source and indispensable Support of life, spiritual and eternal. But in what sense are we to take this language? and how, in a way, quite as real as the taking of natural food, is this Living Bread to be appropriated?

Does Christ say this metonymically? One class of Scriptural interpreters would resolve every claim of this sort into mere trope and figure—food only

for the pious imagination—rhetorical embellishment, emptied altogether of its Divine contents. To make it the suggestive image simply of heavenly food, like pictures of fruits, fishes and birds, so common in dining halls, reminders only of the good things from God—what is this but to rob it, in fact, of all necessary Substantial character and form. We may no more feed the soul on flowers of rhetoric and figures of speech than the body on the creations of an artist's fancy. The figure stands for the profoundest spiritual reality. "What our Saviour means is that He is to us the principle of *spiritual* nourishment in just as strict and true a sense as that the bread we eat is to us a principle of *bodily* nourishment."

As Bread is not to be resolved here into suggestive emblem and figure, so neither into mere instruction.<sup>4</sup> It is not to be confounded with Christian thought and teaching: the power of the Christian pulpit or the religious press. Christ does Himself, indeed, say in this memorable interview: "The *words* that I speak unto

<sup>4</sup> "The words here employed are such as it is inconceivable that any mere man could have uttered them. On the lips of any merely human teacher they have no meaning whatever. Nowhere in any literature, not even in the luxuriant imagery of the East, do we find an instance of a teacher speaking of the reception of his doctrine under so astounding a metaphor as 'eating his flesh' and 'drinking his blood.' The phrases here used are unique." Maclear, *Evidential Value of the Holy Eucharist*, p. 126.

you, they are spirit and they are life." But this, not in a separate and abstract way. The person and words of Christ are not, in any such arbitrary style, to be sundered, and thought of as divisible and independent powers in the world. Christ is Himself Christianity; not any scheme of doctrine to which even rightly His name is affixed. His Saviourhood resides, not in His words as such, but in the mysterious constitution of His person: Himself "the Word made flesh," and the Living Root to which they are linked.

There is, indeed, a true sense in which the thoughts of others are our life. We feed on them; they enter into our daily being; by them we are made stronger or weaker for the right; we adopt them as principles of action. They make our intellectual aliment. Hence the current phrases, "drinking in instruction," "devouring books." But in the deepest powers of our nature this makes us not one with their writers as the apostles speak of *being in Christ*. Our life, in its aims, plans, pursuits, motives, spirit, interests and issues, may lie as wide apart from theirs as time and eternity, heaven and hell. Indeed, in the same outward way, it is not impossible to conceive of there being even a believing acceptance of Christ's words without anything like oneness of soul or so much as purposed correspondence of life. More than the

world's best teacher, He is its only Lord and Life; saving from sin and death, not by a higher philosophy, and a purer code of morals, but by sinless life and glorious deed undoing sin's power even to its last issue. Not words abstractly taken, but redemptive character and work, have made Him the Head of a new humanity. "Christ is then the Bread of Life, not in the sense that He conveys to us instruction in divine truth, but in that through Him as the indwelling fulness of the Godhead was imparted to human nature a new principle of life."<sup>5</sup>

Only slowly these captious Jews come to apprehend His real meaning. Not at once had He identified Himself *personally* with the Bread. It was at first this indirect and impersonal statement: "The Bread of God is that<sup>6</sup> which cometh down from heaven, and

<sup>5</sup> *Orations and Essays*, by J. L. Diman, D.D., p. 335. "The intellectual nature is nourished and stimulated by books. We digest the wise sayings of Bacon, and Shakespeare, and Burke, and make them a part of our own mental being. But it would be a strained and unmeaning phrase to say that we eat the flesh and drink the blood of Bacon, or Shakespeare, or Burke. It must be, then, in some deeper sense than that He outwardly instructs us that our Lord calls Himself the Bread of Life. Our Saviour meant to assert for Himself a dignity and efficacy far beyond those of a mere teacher." *Ib.*, p. 333.

<sup>6</sup> Not "He," as in the authorized version. Stier: "That does indeed lie in the background of the subject, but does not yet shape itself into words; for it is in verse 35 that the new, great utterance begins—*Εγώ εἰμι*." Alford: "The words *ὁ καταβαίνων* are the predicate of *ὁ ἄρτος*, and do not apply, in the

giveth life unto the world." A request immediately followed which showed on their part only a vague conjecture of His power somehow to prolong indefinitely their lives: "Sir, evermore give us this bread." It was the same low carnal motive which prompted the request of the Samaritaness: "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw" (St. John iv. 15). She and they were alike in this, that by His gratuity they would escape toilsome effort in procuring the necessities of natural life.<sup>7</sup> Neither she nor they connected with the marvellous circumstance any thought of the spiritual needs He was among them to satisfy. And it was only by a startling word, He lifted their thoughts out of the low, material sphere in which they were

construction of this verse, to Christ personally, however truly they apply to Him in fact." Meyer: "*Ὁ κατὰβαίρων* refers to *ὁ ἀπὸς*, and states *its specific property*, both as to its origin and working, both being essentially connected; it does not refer to Jesus, though in the personal application of the general affirmation, Jesus, by the bread, *represents* and must represent, Himself. The direct reference to Jesus would anticipate the subsequent advance of the discourse." Maclear: "Christ has not yet identified Himself with the Bread. It is still impersonal." So Ellicott, Lange, Farrar, Westcott. Hence the change in the revised version.

<sup>7</sup> "Like Ponce de Leon, with the spring of unfading youth in Florida, they thought that the new gift would literally make them immortal, and eagerly clamored to have a boon so far in advance of the mere barley loaves of the day before." Geike, *Life and Words of Christ*, Vol. II., p. 193.

moving up to His higher spiritual level. On their ears fell the astounding claim, direct, emphatic, and absolute: "I AM the Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst. For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

How calm, yet how majestic these words!<sup>s</sup> No indirection here. Not only is the assertion positively made of His divine nature and descent from heaven, but even of ability—God's alone—to raise the dead. And how impossible for these Jewish adversaries to restrain any longer their dissent!

At once their thoughts busy themselves about His natural descent. They see no indications of superhuman birth and being. They only see indications of the ordinary life common at the time in every Galilean village. They know His parentage. It is a point on which they cannot be mis-

<sup>s</sup> "In our Lord's allusions to His relations to the Eternal Father there is nothing more striking than the naturalness, the almost childlike simplicity with which He asserts His essential oneness with the Father. The revelations, though so astounding in the wider sweep of their assertions, are clothed in language so majestic and yet so simple that the idea of invention is utterly preposterous. It would take no less than the superhuman Jesus to invent such a Jesus as the one exhibited by St. John." Godet.

taken. He is from Nazareth, and the son of Joseph. How then can He, so truly a man, so readily identified by family connection, be this that He claims—the Source and Support of life? Because He seemed thus so thoroughly human, they concluded He could not be divine! “How is it then,” one whispers to another, “that He saith, I came down from heaven?”

Their perplexity is perfectly natural and undisguised; and so far from its being relieved by what follows, it is only intensified.<sup>9</sup> Who, save One who is Himself truly God (St. John i. 18), can speak of seeing Him naturally? Christ thus makes this specific claim of unity with God: “Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is of God, He hath seen the Father.” Nor does He stop at this. Quite as great the shock, when, man as He certainly is, He goes straight on to assert the necessity of vital union with Himself in an actual participation of His “flesh and blood” in order to eternal life. “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have

<sup>9</sup> “He met the murmurers, as He always did, by a stronger, fuller, clearer declaration of the very truth which they reject. It was thus that He had dealt with Nicodemus; it was thus that He had taught the woman of Samaria; it was thus also that He answered the Temple doctors who arraigned His infringement of their sabbatic rules.” Farrar, *Life of Christ*, Vol. I., p. 414.

no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.”<sup>10</sup>

Polar elements of Being here, which are only conceivable, in living and harmonious union, upon the fact and basis of the Incarnation—“God manifest in the flesh”—designated by St. Paul, “The *mystery* of godliness” (I Tim. iii. 16). And it is the “root-mystery” of Christianity. It is fundamental and primal in the whole economy of grace. Everything hinges here on its realness on both sides: “God, of the substance of the Father; and man, of the substance of His mother”—“the Fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. ii. 9).

An essential feature in the great atonement is “flesh and blood”—oneness of the Redeemer with the nature to be redeemed. Whatever else the

<sup>10</sup> “To a Jew the idea of the reception of the Body and Blood of a Sacrificial Victim, at once Human and Divine, must at first sight have seemed more blasphemous than words can express.” . . . “Here a Jewish audience in the synagogue of Capernaum are bidden to eat of the flesh and drink of the blood of Him who speaks to them! It is impossible for us to realize the startling effect which these words must have produced on those who first heard them. If there was one thing more than another which the Jew was solemnly forbidden, it was the even tasting the blood of animals (Gen. ix. 4; Lev. xvii. 10-16).” Maclear, *Evidential Value of the Holy Eucharist*, pp. 76, 126.



Saviour of men is, He must be man. There was a time when actual humanity was denied Christ. His body was not such in reality, only in appearance, and for a time; something spectral and shadowy,—a transient wonder; a mere theophany. How pronounced the old Creeds over against this illusive theory, only giving emphatic utterance to Scriptural statements, and the necessities of the case. “*Born of the Virgin Mary*”: “*Made man for us men, and for our salvation.*” So the *Te Deum*: “When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man, Thou didst humble Thyself to be *born of a Virgin.*” The nature He took as the second Adam was the nature of the first Adam. Neither as angel, nor disembodied spirit, but He came *in the flesh*. To call this in question, St. John makes the very mark of Antichrist. “Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God” (I John iv. 3).

Nothing the humanity without the Divinity; and, equally, nothing the Divinity without the humanity! This only would have wholly isolated Him from human experiences, human sufferings, human sorrows, and made it impossible for Him ever to be touched by the power of human sympathy. What alone redeems the Speaker of this discourse, with its ever-recurring “I” and “Me” in such strange relations,

from the charge of vainest egoism and conceit, is the oneness in Him of essential Divinity and true humanity—*Heaven's richest treasure in earthen vessel*. Therefore, the emphatic personal announcement: "I AM the living bread which *came down from heaven*: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My *flesh*, which I will give for the life of the world."

An advance on the thought is made from this point. For the first time, explicit reference is made to His mediatorial character and sacrificial death. With a right view of the person of Christ, the thought becomes clear and consistent.

Though an indispensable element, yet the material body is not the core and marrow of a man's being. Only the light back of a transparency makes it luminous and readable. Eyes flash with intelligence and thought when a living soul looks out of those windows. The body is but the shrine and habitation of immortal powers—the vehicle of a human life. The immaterial spirit gone, the house tenantless crumbles to dust.

Dismissing the materialism which the invention of a later age gathered about these words, let us try to fathom their profound depth of meaning. This "eating His flesh, and drinking His blood" was a "hard saying" to these Jewish discontents. They were

startled, and stumbled at it. "What does the man mean?"

What did Christ mean, first, by "flesh and blood"? and, then, what by "eating and drinking"?

Pure literalism is out of the question. Plainly enough, He means not the outward form and substance, as such, however, in the past, ignorant and superstitious reverence made so much account of supposed remains of the original Paschal cake and the "real blood" preserved by Joseph of Arimathea;<sup>11</sup> and, however, in the present, Romish adoration still recognizes the veritable body of Christ in the consecrated wafer. Thus, "after the flesh we know Him no more." The life of the sacred One is of deeper moment than the sacred body, as such. "The atoning virtue lies not in its material substance, but in the life of which it is the vehicle."

"Flesh and blood" stand, in an inclusive sense, for the great atonement. They designate the Personal and vital principle of redemption in the double aspect of *life and death*: the totality of His meritorious life, and the totality of His mediatorial work, in full anticipation of His atoning death—what Christ, being what He was, both *did and suffered* for us.

<sup>11</sup> Stanley, *Christian Institutions*, pp. 96, 103—the legend of the *Sangrail*.

First of all, it is the *incarnate* Christ, and then the incarnate Christ *crucified*.

Our life in the flesh is of *sin unto death*. What this fallen life needed for its redemption was a truly representative life, standing like it in the flesh, standing in similar relations and circumstances, yet superior to the law of sin at every point, answering in every particular the Divine idea, and by its own assailed but vindicated merit touching every stage of that life with atoning virtue. Flesh stands here for the wholeness of this tried human nature of Christ, complete and perfect on its earthly side, in every relation, in every direction, at every point from the lowly manger to the terrible ordeal and obedience of the cross (Phil. ii. 8). Thus, the principle of the atonement is seen to lie, not in the words and teachings of Christ separately considered, never so wise, important, and true, but in the facts of that tried and tempted, but sinless and perfect life.

Nor this only. There must be, and there is besides a concrete act of redemption—a violent death. “Blood” stands here for that. The law of sin is death. “By one man sin entered into the world, and *death by sin*; and so death passed upon all men, for that all sinned” (Rom. v. 12). “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is *death*” (I Cor. xv. 26). But

how is it to be destroyed other than by the death first of One stronger. There is in Christ's own mind an undoubted reference in this word to this dark necessity.

The blood is the life-element; by a very net-work of veins and arteries carried a life-bearing current to every part of the system. In the earlier Scriptures, life and blood stand as synonyms; and are most intimately associated in a sacrificial sense. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls" (Lev. xvii. 11). "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood *is* the life. . . Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water" (Deut. xii. 23, 24). In this ancient use it marks life sacrificed for life forfeited. "The blood atones, by means of the *soul* that is in it." A man's blood is his *best*, his all, *himself*.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> "In all the languages of the world, blood is the proof—the warrant—of affection and of sacrifice. To shed blood voluntarily for another is to give the best that man can give. It is to give a sensible proof of—it is to give almost a bodily form to love. This, our profound human instinct, is common to all ages, to all civilizations, to all religions. The blood of the soldier who dies for duty,—the blood of the martyr who dies for truth,—the blood of the man who dies that another may live—blood like this is an embodiment of the highest moral powers in human life. And these powers most assuredly were, all of them, represented in the Blood that flowed from the wounds of Christ on Calvary." Canon Liddon, *Sermons for the People*, p. 130.

Everywhere throughout the later Scriptures, the *blood* of Christ is the symbol of His passion and atoning death, only with the perfectly voluntary element entering into it. In this connection, then, and on the lips of Christ, it is plain enough, that "flesh and blood" stand for Himself, the inner substance and power of His life, in pure unselfishness of nature, in unsparing devotion, in singular benevolence, given for life forfeited: a substitute and sacrifice in full for mankind.<sup>13</sup> He travels Himself and alone the only way of salvation through the resignation of Gethsemane and the sanguinary scene of Calvary, making way in the end for the victory of Easter and the glory of Olivet: *by* death triumphing over death and him that had the power of death. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). How then is accomplished redemption linked to the person of this victorious Champion and mighty Leader of the sacramental host who "by His own *blood* entered in once into the holy place!"

<sup>13</sup> Comp. Rom. iii. 25; Col. i. 14, 20; I Peter i. 2, 19; I John i. 7; Rev. i. 5; Heb. ix. 14, 20. On this passage Canon Liddon remarks, "Christ is the High Priest of the human race who is offering a victim in expiation of human sin, and that Victim Himself. He is the one real Sacrificer of whom all the Jewish priests had for those long centuries been only shadows, and His sacrifice is the one offering which throughout all ages has power in Heaven." *Sermons for the People*, p. 125.

In Christ, crucified and risen, redemption is an accomplished fact. But this is not all, nor individually enough. Bread must be *eaten* to give strength. Mere idle contemplation will not serve a man in his necessity. He needs no man to tell him that he must eat to live. Can the mere thought or image of Christ do in the spiritual sphere what evidently they cannot in the natural? To the end of personal salvation, the Divine Speaker indicates the necessity of alike *actual participation in the one saving life of the world*. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> In his *Mystical Presence*—a book full of Christological thought—Dr. Nevin strongly says: "Could language more clearly teach, that the salvation which we have by Christ, including His whole mediatorial grace, comes to us only by the communication of His own life." . . . "Not by the atonement then, as something made over to us separately from Christ's person, are we placed in the possession of salvation and life; but only by the atonement as comprehended in His person itself, and received through faith in this form. To eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, is not to lay hold of the merits of His death simply in an abstract way, a thing impossible in the nature of the case; but to lay hold of them in Christ Himself, who is made of God unto us all that we need for righteousness as well as life. Such clearly is the sense of the passage before us, taken in connection with the whole discourse of which it is a part. The

But how now are these most momentous words to be taken? Their inward correspondence with the later Eucharistic institution at once suggests itself. It is true, that primarily there was no reference to the Holy Communion. And yet it is quite as true, that the sacramental is their natural and inlying sense. It is true, that those who first heard them at Capernaum had not even the slightest conception of any such sacramental significance. Indeed, how could they? The Eucharist had not then been instituted. And yet it is quite as true, that ever thereafter to every one either reading or hearing them read such reference is both instinctive and irresistible.<sup>15</sup>

Nothing is made out against their sacramental in-

hunger under which the world is suffering spiritually, does not consist merely in the want of religious instruction or new impulses and motives for the will. The aliment for which it calls, must come to it in the form of life. Christ personally is this bread; because it is only in His person, that the *Life* of the everlasting Word, which is the true *Light* of men, has revealed itself in the sphere of our common existence. Only in this form, does He still the gnawing hunger of humanity, by supplying it with the very substance of life itself; a hunger which is otherwise like the grave, that never cries, *It is enough*" (pp. 240, 241).

<sup>15</sup> "It may be granted," says Prof. Watkins, "that no one who heard the discourse at Capernaum could understand it of the solemn institution, which was still in the future, and then wholly outside any possibility of current thought; but it does not follow that the discourse was not intended to teach the doctrine of the Eucharist, and to be interpreted in the events and words of the Last Supper."



tent that, as a matter of fact, the Holy Communion followed twelve months after, any more than against the like intent of those earlier words to Nicodemus regarding Holy Baptism, before its formal institution. In the fitness of things, every mind is open to the close correspondence between these anticipatory words and the familiar ones standing in the Communion Office, taken from its apostolic celebration.<sup>16</sup> "Here, as there, the participation of the believer in Christ, is made to stand particularly in eating His flesh and drinking His blood." The idea is precisely the same in both cases.<sup>17</sup> What the momentous words an-

<sup>16</sup> "For in the night in which He was betrayed, He took Bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is My Body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me. Likewise, after supper, He took the cup; and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this; for this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins; do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of Me" (I Cor. xi. 23-25).

<sup>17</sup> Olshausen: "The Saviour could indeed not with propriety speak of a *rite* before it was instituted, so that nobody could understand Him; but He might touch the *idea*, out of which the rite subsequently grew. This idea is that Jesus is the Principle of life and nutriment to the new, regenerate man, not only for his soul and spirit, but also for his glorified body." Godet: "We must not say that in this discourse Jesus alludes to the Holy Supper; but that the Lord's Supper and this discourse refer to one and the same divine fact, expressed here by a metaphor, there by an emblem." Alford: "To the ordinance itself

nounced beforehand, that the sacred Memorial is doing, age after age—exhibiting with outward show and true inward effect His broken body and His blood shed for sin, and, in the most direct way, challenging men to draw near and take in faith “the Bread of Life.” It is thus readily seen, that the absolute truth in the one case, is made, in due order and form, to take on in the other concrete and specific act, furnishing, as the ages come and go, in a perpetual ordinance, itself resting on the same authority, the means divinely-appointed whereby men may realize its inner force and purpose: “partakers of His most blessed Body and Blood.”

Thus, the Holy Communion comes to be what the Institutor Himself meant it—the meeting-point of man’s great need and God’s rich grace, according to the Church’s Catechism: “a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.” Not therefore suggestive alone: an aid simply to

there is no reference, nor could there well have been any. But the spiritual verity which underlies the ordinance is one and the same with that here insisted on.” Westcott: “The words set forth clearly in thought what the Holy Communion presents outwardly in fact. They give the idea of which that gives the pledge. And here lies the marvel of divine love. Without some such external rite as the Holy Communion we might have doubted as to the fulfilment of the promise of Christ to ourselves. But that at once takes us out of ourselves; enables us to think only of the Lord.”

memory: a stimulus to pious thought and feeling: the memorial only of a past transaction, as some would have it, emptied entirely of its substantial and essential Content, of its inward force and character: a sign merely of needed yet absent grace; but more a great deal, its *seal*, its very vehicle and channel: "the outward visible sign and the inward spiritual grace" standing, as Hooker so grandly expressed it, in "concurrent"<sup>18</sup> relation: God's own treasure in "earthen vessels."

In the Holy Eucharist, our communication is not with the past merely nor mainly, not with the dead Christ of Calvary; "but with the living Saviour Himself, in the fulness of His glorified person, made present to us for the purpose by the power of the Holy Ghost." How perfectly absurd then this grave statement: "The true Sacrament is the *doctrine* of Christ; the visible Sacraments are forms whose inner substance and life is the *truth* which they set forth to the eye."<sup>19</sup> Not so; no mere object-lesson—the pictorial exhibit simply of essential truth. Christ is Himself its inner substance and life. Sadly enough the writer does but fall in readily with the general spirit that would resolve everything here into simple metaphor, all the while forgetting that to be anything real and

<sup>18</sup> *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book VI., ch. vi. 10, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Thompson, *Theology of Christ*.

true it must itself stand in a living, substantial, personal background.

Modern Puritanism shows itself just here utterly at fault. Its repudiation of a real participation of Christ's person in the Sacrament, under any form, and more especially under the form of His humanity, is outspoken and unambiguous. "There is," says Dr. Dick, "an absurdity in the notion that there is any communion with the body and blood of Christ, considered in themselves." Trying to get rid of a wretched perversion of the truth on the one side, it has thus fallen into an error, on the other side, quite as grievous and serious.

"Concurrent" relation, a mystical union of the outward and inward parts, but no confusion; no subtle transmutation of the one into the other, so that an oral reception of the elements does, in fact, carry along a participation of the body of the glorified Redeemer. In the refined materialism of the Romish theory of Transubstantiation they are held to be thus one and the same; so inseparable, in fact, that the elements remain ever after the objects of adoration and worship. Of course the *ex opere operato* force of the Sacrament follows: a purely magical effect, in which the right condition of the participant plays no necessary and vital part.

Between these opposites lies the truth of a Real Objective Presence, invisible and spiritual, nevertheless real. Two words hold us aright, and define best of all the nature of this concurrent relation—the spiritual real presence of Christ: *real* over against the mere representational theory which reduces the whole sacramental transaction to a refreshing act of memory alone, with no virtue or force in itself: *spiritual* over against the transmutation-theory which, confounding inner substance and outward form, localizes and materializes the body and blood of Christ. At once both real and spiritual, the Sacrament is of force, under the power of the Holy Ghost and by the action of faith, to make good its own purpose and end—a real participation in the Saviour's life.

The communication is not oral. Not the mouth, but faith is the organ of deepest receptivity. The true eating is *inward, spiritual*. However, the necessary inward condition is no substitute for the outward act. We are not to lose the solemn sacramental sense of these stupendous words by resolving them into a highly figurative description of faith. This would be to empty them of their whole force and meaning. Faith is necessary. Everything hinges upon it. But it is not all that is necessary. It is no idle thought or fancy. It is the breath of

spiritual activity, and no apology for indolence: not a single act, but rather a life-long series of acts in full correspondence. It works not the neglect, but the fullest appreciation, of the Holy Sacrament. Faith finds here its truest employment, its "highest energy." "This crowning act of faith incorporates us in Christ: *we abide in Him and He in us.*"

On the spiritual element necessary at once on both sides—the Divine Object and the human subject—the Church is quite pronounced in her teaching. Avoiding both extremes—pure literalism and pure memorialism—and maintaining the spiritual real Presence, she calls the Holy Communion "the most comfortable Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ"; and teaches us that the Father "hath given His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but also to be our *spiritual food and sustenance* in that Holy Sacrament." She teaches us that "the benefit is great, if with a *true penitent heart and lively faith* we receive that Holy Sacrament." The English Book contains this parenthetical clause, "for then we *spiritually eat* the flesh of Christ and drink His blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ and Christ with us." And in the prayer of humble access, this strong language occurs: "so to eat the flesh of thy dear

Son Jesus Christ, and drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us."

To her kneeling children she comes with no paten and chalice emptied of their real Substance. With the bread, she delivers this assuring word: "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and *feed on Him in thy heart by faith*, with thanksgiving"; and then with the cup, this: "the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life."

In the "*Articles of Religion*" stands this unmistakable language: "The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after a *heavenly and spiritual manner*. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is *Faith*."

After pronouncing so emphatically upon the "spiritual manner" of Giver, gift, and receiver, how appropriate this prayer of thanksgiving with which the solemn service closes:

“Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank Thee, for that Thou dost vouchsafe to feed us who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of Thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of Thy favor and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs through hope of Thy everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of Thy dear Son.”



X.

The Redemptive Life.

“O Sacred Head, now wounded,  
    With grief and shame bowed down,  
Now scornfully surrounded  
    With thorns, Thine only crown.  
O Sacred Head, what glory,  
    What bliss till now was Thine !  
Yet though despised and gory,  
    I joy to call Thee mine.”

## X.

### The Redemptive Life.

*"I AM the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."*  
—ST. JOHN XIV. 6.

*"In Him was Life; and the Life was the Light of men."*—ST.  
JOHN I. 4.

MARKED peculiarities appear in the fourth Gospel. In substance and style, it differs broadly from the synoptic narratives. Its theme is the personal Word in divine and human relations: "the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*"—"the Word made *flesh*," as the writer himself expresses the double fact. Going back to the absolute Source and Principle of all things, it connects Christ in essential and original being with the eternity of the past, then with the living present, and then with the eternity of the future: in a word, all He was virtually and historically. To this effect is the apostle's plain avowal: "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus

is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have LIFE through His name" (xx. 31).<sup>1</sup>

The vocabulary of this Gospel is unique. It abounds in characteristic thoughts and expressions. Here are ever-recurring words, simple in themselves, but used in a profoundly spiritual sense. They stand for no mere spiritual abstractions, but concrete-eternal realities. Intrinsic wealth of meaning more than makes up for their small number. "If," says Godet, "the author has only a few terms in his vocabulary, those terms may be compared to pieces of gold with which great lords make payment."<sup>2</sup> In the whole range of ancient literature, sacred and profane, the fourth Gospel is actually without a parallel in this regard.

If one word more than another gives us the keynote, that word is "Life," occurring no less than fifty-five times, and presenting Christ in various aspects. In the presence of an animate world, life standing in countless organisms, from minutest animaculæ eluding the power of unaided vision up to man, the glory and

<sup>1</sup> Says Augustine, "While the three other Evangelists remain below with the man Christ Jesus, and speak but little of His Godhead, St. John, as if impatient of setting his foot on the earth, rises, from the very first words of his Gospel, not only above earth, and the span of air and sky, but above all angels and invisible powers, till he reaches Him by whom all things were made."

<sup>2</sup> *St. John's Gospel*, Vol. I., p. 189.

crown of the universe under such form, St. John, taking into view Christ's original and underived being—"the Word that was with God and was God"—says: "In Him was Life"—in Him, as water in a fountain—its eternal Spring-head: "With Thee is the Fountain of Life" ( $\pi\eta\gamma\gamma\eta\ \xi\omega\eta\varsigma$ , Ps. xxxvi. 9, Septuagint). "As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given the Son to have life in Himself" (v. 26).

Entering into human flesh, He is still Life, and, in the presence of disease and physical infirmity, shows Himself the author and giver of life in the fresh vigor given to the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda (v. 8, 9).

In the presence of ever-recurring physical and spiritual need, giving sustenance to thousands in a marvellous blessing on food, He is still Life, and proclaims Himself the "Bread of Life" (vi. 35)—the sustaining power of the best life of men.

In the presence of religious difficulties and doubts, He declares Himself "the Light of Life" (viii. 12), and St. John says of Him, "the Life was the light of men" (i. 4).

In the presence of material death, He not only proclaims Himself "The Resurrection, and the Life" (xi. 25), but shows His superiority, first, by conquering death in the person of others, and then universal death in His own victory over the grave.

In the presence of sin's ultimate effect—eternal death—He proclaims Himself the power of an endless life, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (xvii. 3).

In the presence of spiritual death—the moral ruin of the human world, in the sorrowful failure of its primal headship, so utter and complete as to be wholly incompetent to its own recovery—He, the second Adam, though standing in the same sinful conditions, yet Himself "without sin," proclaims Himself its "LIFE"—the Principle of a new moral creation; the Head of a new humanity.

The fortunes of the human race and human nature, as has already appeared, were bound up originally, in the free, untrammelled course of the first man: not by outward regulation and appointment simply, as a representative acting for others and involving them in his own wrong-doing, but by actual *in-being*, the law of an invisible life—on the broad natural principle of like producing like. The world of nature is full of such vast potential possibilities. In every seed is enclosed the latent power of indefinite self-multiplication—life after its own order. The race was not simply represented but comprehended in the person of Adam. In this collective character he could set it in the path of secure and perfect obedience, or

draw it down with him to ruin. It was to organic ruin; and that in a double sense, the ruin of the entire race and our entire nature. Sin is a common inheritance. We are sinners, then, not by accident—the contagion of bad example, or misguidance simply—but by one and the same miserable lot. Superficial Deism treats mankind as a “living sand-heap” without generic connection—separate and independent units touched by no inherited ill. Biblical Theism, as old as human thought, sees, in the Edenic catastrophe, “the power of a single life—men one before they became many; and as many, still one.”

And the *whole* man as well became corrupt. Body and soul, all our powers, physical, mental and moral, are maimed, weakened, and misdirected by the fall. It is a nature marred and wounded in every part, that Adam has transmitted to his posterity along the generations. We are bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. Participating in his nature, we share at the same time in all the woes he inflicted upon it. The identical nature and life, body and soul, are being reproduced. Evil character is hereditary. Every man recognizes himself in every other man.

“One touch of nature makes the world kin.”  
“There is no caste in blood.” Over all and everywhere, sin is the active principle of physical dis-

organization, moral disharmony, social disturbance and discord.

With the powers of our being, all the stages of our life, from birth to death, show sin's defiling touch. Natural birth is a birth in sin. The corruption is seen to be rudimental; a pre-natal principle, in fact. So already the Psalmist owns: "I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm li. 5). He sees the roots of his sin going as deep even as the roots of his being. He was right in his painful conviction, that depravity was the generic fault of human nature, and so directly connects his own sin with the earliest period of his being, where it mysteriously linked itself to the life of another. Evil is ingrown in man.

*Fallen* nature determines not only the sphere of redemption, but defines as well its scope and conditions. To be at all complete, it must be of alike organic character, in a second and superior Headship laying hold of our nature at that distant and mysterious point where sin first touches it, and following, in its transcending power, the very order of our fallen life, through moral conflict, death, and the grave. Hence the vital importance that attaches to the brief statement of the Creed: "Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," setting forth on both sides, divine and human, the reality of the



Incarnation. And hence the deep significance of the angelic annunciation: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (St. Luke i. 35).<sup>3</sup> Nearer the original here is the old version of the *Te Deum* in the English Prayer Book:

"When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man  
Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb."

By a real birth "THE LIFE" enters into actual human relations—the true child of *humanity*. This is of original and primary significance for the purposes of *human* redemption. Necessarily an historical movement, it must be regarded as making its actual start in the Christmas fact. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same" (Heb. ii. 14). This puts Christ squarely with us on the plane of the human to meet our experiences, share our trials, encounter our temptations, stand against our sins, face our foes, fight our battles.

<sup>3</sup> "What benefit dost thou receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ? That He is our Mediator; and with His innocence and perfect holiness covers, in the sight of God, my sins, wherein I was conceived and brought forth." *Heidelberg Catechism*, Ques. XXXVI.

It makes Him our Kinsman after the flesh, our elder Brother.

It is not possible to magnify the Incarnation. In the judgment and fear of some there is thought to be such danger. Whatever, in their view, magnifies the Incarnation, prejudices to that extent the Atonement as such. The death of Christ is the fact of main importance with them. In that is centred exclusively the whole idea of the atonement, and for them there is only suspicion and holy horror in any prominence given to the incarnate Mystery in the Christmas Festival. They would have its commemoration shorn of all religious significance. Churches are closed; and the organ dumb.<sup>4</sup>

But for this antecedent fact, it is hard to see how even the dark tragedy of the Cross could be

<sup>4</sup> "The Incarnation is not to be viewed as a mere outward device for making the Atonement possible. To this degrading conception of Christ, must come in the end all that way of magnifying His death, by which His life is made to be with regard to it of only secondary and more or less dependent account. The view is common among modern unchurchly and so-called evangelical sects; which indeed arrogate to themselves this title *evangelical*, for the most part, just because they lay all stress on the Atonement taken in such miserably abstract sense. The whole Gospel is thus shorn of its proper historical force; and the result is, on all sides, a certain amount of unrealness and Gnostic spiritualism, which is sure to prove itself unfriendly always to true and vigorous faith." *Mercersbury Rev.*, 1868, p. 601, Art. by John W. Nevin, D.D., LL.D.

sacrificial in any real and proper sense—be, in fact, all and what is claimed for it: “a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world.” How can we fully appreciate the rich and ripe Fruit while so little account is made of the necessary Root wherein it stands? How hold on with any sort of confidence and clear conviction to the vicarious Sacrifice as such, if we throw overboard that which is indeed most vital to it?

In no such arbitrary style may this Life be set into sections, and one event selected from the whole as being in and of itself *alone* atoning. The Cross is no isolated fact. It stands in the bosom of other supernatural facts, before and after, alike significant and saving. Like creation, like revelation and history, Redemption is to be regarded, not as a single act, but a whole series of acts of similar transcendent character stretching onward to an appointed and self-completing end.

The less even as the larger tributaries go to make up the majestic river hastening on, with ever broader and swifter current, to pour itself at last a mighty flood into the sea: and from its mouth to its distant source it is one. So manhood stands related to its infantile beginning and its glorious end. The earlier years are taken up and handed on only to find

their deepest sense and meaning in the crowning glory of the whole. And thus this Life must stand together, atoning and saving alike in every part, from the rude manger, from the angelic birth-anthem of "Glory to God in the Highest," to the tragic scene of Calvary, to the Easter-triumph and the open heaven welcoming His return. The life is the thing of atoning virtue, passing through every stage of our earthly existence and touching it with the merit of unsullied Purity: Itself sinless at every point though lived in a world full of sin, and all beside sinners.

The problem of sin, its actual undoing in the human world out to its last consequences—death, temporal and eternal—gave to this LIFE aim and purpose, strength and sweet inspiration, saving significance and merit.

Nobody needs to be told that sin marks the dark reality of our life. It is seen to hold its course, from birth to death, through ever-recurring temptations and mournful failures. We are tempted, and it is only to sin again and again. There is nothing pantomimic about these every-day temptations. He does but mock us who barely suggests the thought. On the other hand, we know them to be terrific realities, involving us in shame and sorrow well nigh at every step.

To our Lord Himself they were no less so. Here was no fictitious danger on the one side; no empty parade of resistive powers on the other. With our very being He assumed the tremendous risks and responsibilities of a true human probation—the experiment in His case having against it all the disadvantages of a harder condition of things in the moral world than actually prevailed when the first fair trial came to such an overwhelming failure. For the problem which, in the assumption of *fallen* human nature, Christ proposed and accepted for Himself, was none other than this,—namely, by personally identifying Himself with all its ill-fortunes, and sharing the very lameness superinduced by sin, to master, *in* it and *for* it, the infernal power which had wrought all the mischief and woe.

“’Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,  
Another thing to fall.”<sup>5</sup>

A condition precedent here, of course, was full moral freedom; which means necessarily freedom again either in the right or wrong direction. This implies in the Second, as it already had in the first, Adam, the actual possibility of evil. Mistaken conceptions as to the sinlessness of Christ are not uncommon. To intimate the possibility

<sup>5</sup> *Shakespeare, Measure for Measure.*

of sin and failure in His case is rudely to shock the sensibilities of some persons. And yet under any other view, it is hard to see how our Lord's earnest and incessant conflict with the head-power of evil becomes anything more than a sham, taking from Him all proper credit for firmness, and from the work itself all real merit as actually achieved through manifold hindrances. But this height of moral sublimity, whereon He stands in peerless and majestic solitariness, essential to His mission as Redeemer, "*without sin*" (Heb. iv. 15), does by no means indicate a negative<sup>6</sup> relation to sin, mere childlike innocence; but unquestionably a positive attribute—*acquired* sinlessness: an attitude of deadly conflict with

<sup>6</sup> "Whether the innocent become righteous or guilty, holy or depraved, temptation alone can reveal. The untried is a negative character, can become positive only through trial. Till every link in the chain that is to hold the vessel to its anchor be tested, you cannot be certain that it is of adequate strength. Till the bridge over which myriads are to sweep in the swift-rushing train be proved of sufficient strength, you cannot regard it as a safe pathway. So, till the will has been solicited to the utmost to evil, its fidelity to righteousness cannot be held absolute. The way to obedience lies through suffering. The inflexible in morals is what will not bend, however immense and intense the strain. Only a Christ tempted, 'yet without sin,' could be the perfect Christ. What He endured proved His adequacy for His work; and out of His great trial He emerged, not simply sinless, which He had been before, but righteous." Fairbairn, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, p. 88.

sin, and the mastery of it always by the energetic exercise of His whole powers—something, therefore, achieved, maintained, defended in spite of all the restless malignancy of hell, and under all the liabilities and felt solicitations to sin ever besetting human life.

Thus, His immunity from sin comes before us, not as the overpowering necessity of His Divinity, nor the easy thing it is commonly supposed to have been by reason of that Higher nature, but the demonstrated element of His actual being—*fallen* humanity carried in Him, by a crossed and hindered way, up to complete impeccability. This is shown to have been the case, particularly in those significant passages (Heb. ii. 10; v. 7-9),<sup>7</sup> where Christ's perfection, the moral faultlessness whereby He makes Himself the Author of Salvation to us, is represented as a real *attainment*—obedience learned by counter inducements of the sternest kind. It is this that lends to the active obedience

<sup>7</sup> "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."

of Christ all its profound significance, its atoning and saving virtue. Under any other view, we must give up in fact the realness of the conflict, and as well the moral grandeur and redemptive merit of the victory itself.<sup>8</sup>

The first Adam was only potentially perfectly holy. The probation to which he was subjected was for the purpose, in the free and untrammelled exercise of his powers, of developing this possibility of not sinning into the higher stage of being, the impossibility of sinning—absolute righteousness. Christ assumed, not the original unfallen, but our fallen humanity. In this second experiment, He stood not precisely where Adam before Him had, but, as has already been said, with immense odds against Him—evil, with all the prestige of victory and its consequent enthronement in the very constitution of our nature, armed with more terrific power against the possible realization of this Divine idea of man—per-

<sup>8</sup> Ullmann, in his *Sinlessness of Jesus*, carries out this thought at great length. "The possibility of sin did indeed exist in the case of Jesus, but this possibility never became an actual fact; sin was ever foreign to Him and far from Him, outwardly as well as inwardly; was even absolutely excluded by virtue of the moral power He possessed in the highest purity and fulness, which in all circumstances proved itself victorious. We are entitled to view the matter in this light by the consideration, that, in the doctrine of the Apostles, the perfect manhood of the Redeemer is affirmed." Clark's Ed., p. 48.



fect holiness. All this considered, the disadvantages of the situation, the tremendous risks involved, and the fierceness of the opposition encountered, we come to some adequate sense both of the reality and greatness of that vast moral achievement: human nature tempted, tried, miscarried in Adam, lifted up in Christ to the sphere of actualized sinlessness. Meeting temptation day by day as all must meet it, yet putting aside sin with the temptation, He showed Himself to be the Perfect One, "the Author (*αἴτιος*) of eternal salvation," its primal cause and personal principle (Heb. v. 9).

Thus taking up human life at its earliest stage, it involved Him in actual contact with temptation and sin peculiar to each and every period. Self-will is the reigning characteristic of childhood. Impatience of parental authority and control is universal. Of course the elimination of sin began at this period of His life. Little is said of the "holy *Child* Jesus," but that little is profoundly significant. The writer of the third Gospel gives us a hint at least into the respectful and submissive nature of His child-life (St. Luke ii. 51)—the earthly relation, in this important particular, standing in full correspondence with this exponent of the Eternal Sonship, "Wist ye not that I *must* be about My Father's business?"

This victory over the lawless spirit of childhood

was repeated in after years, when as a man He took His place among men. Self-seeking—the path of pleasure, or gain, or ambition—is the reigning characteristic of manhood. Men occupied with their own plans, living to please themselves—that was selfish, worldly manhood as Christ Himself met and saw it, and as it is still seen and known to be. By His own free will and action, His life moved steadily forward on a higher plane, and was ruled by a widely different spirit. He does Himself give us its true keynote: “I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of *Him that sent Me*” (St. John vi. 38). “What growth in holiness,” Gess exclaims, “lies between the boy’s ‘must’ and the moral impossibility of the man’s doing anything that is not the Father’s will!” Godet makes this beautiful comment: “He entered into the fulness of human existence in order to realize in it in time the filial life which He realized in the eternal order under the divine form.”<sup>9</sup>

Nor were potent temptations wanting to induce Him to make His own separate and independent will the law of His life (St. Matt. iv. 1–11). Here again we have the profound significance and real merit of His holy obedience—maintaining His integrity in a protracted struggle, whereas the first

<sup>9</sup> *St. John’s Gospel*, Vol. I., p. 188.

Adam failed in the first instance. And thus it is, that the righteousness<sup>10</sup> of His tempted, but holy manhood covers, in the sight of God, the selfishness, sensuality and sin of ours, sanctifying and lifting it up by passing sinlessly through it Himself.

Nor does the struggle close with this signal victory at the outset of His public career. In fact, the Satanic assault upon His sacred purpose in the wilderness may be said only fairly to have inaugurated the dark hostility arrayed from all quarters against this noble Champion of humanity. We do only come to some proper judgment of the terrific nature of the conflict and His just credit for unswerving stability, when the forces matched against Him are considered. Even the brief form in which the facts are presented is of immense service in this regard.

<sup>10</sup> Juke, in *Differences of the Four Gospels*, contrasts St. John's word "*life*" with St. Matthew's word "*righteousness*"—"but different forms or expressions of one and the same reality. Thus St. Matthew records the words, 'Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.' St. John testifies of the Only-begotten,—'In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.' The Epistles have the like distinction. Where St. Paul says, 'The righteousness of God without the law was manifested,' St. John, still in character, says, 'The life was manifested.' When St. Paul comes to 'declare God's righteousness, that He might be just, and yet a justifier,' St. John comes to, bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us.' Both speak of the same reality, in different forms, not without reason."

It shows that His life was not spent in a serenity of atmosphere disturbed by no wicked intrigues, no pursuing hate—the open hostility of enemies, and the treachery of professed friends. No life was so misunderstood and crossed. He stood the least appreciated and most bitterly hated of men. Individuals in place and power, civil and ecclesiastic, were against Him. Alike obnoxious to Pharisees and Sadducees, the leaders of all the religious parties of the day, dropping their differences, in this made common cause, and at length compassed His death under circumstances the most violent and cruel.

The shadow of the Cross darkens the way of holy obedience. Before a bowed soul stands in appalling proximity this extremest test of self-surrender to the perfect will of God: obedience unto death—*“even the death of the Cross.”*

Shall He be turned aside from fulfilling His purpose of grace by the necessities of so dark a fate? Shall He fail at the dire end, and in the failure of its second generic Head every hope of the rescue of the race from its self-made ruin perish for ever? Was there a possibility of this? If the record be no mere fiction, the Gethsemane conflict details a crisis in the mind of the second Adam, when all was made to tremble again upon the decision of One man's will. It was a moment of awful suspense,

broken only by that intense cry of submission, carrying all the rest with it even to the bitter end: "Not My will, but Thine, be done" (St. Luke xxii. 42).

"What, in this way, the Cross sums up, it also," another has said, "helps to interpret; setting before us as it were, in one view, all the features of that sustained struggle of which it was itself the last and fiercest strife, all the depths of atoning love of which it was itself the full and effectual outpouring. Not that His last suffering is in any way to be arbitrarily separated from the rest; but that it was the coming to a head of all that had gone before and thus drew together in one scene of unsurpassed solemnity, and of deepest reality what had scarred, in sundry forms and in various degrees of intensity, all the previous periods of His earthly travail."<sup>11</sup>

Tracing thus the course of this sinless probation, the *whole Life* of Christ is seen to be redemptive. By His unsullied purity, He touched each and every

<sup>11</sup> "It will be found," says Dr. Matheson, "throughout the New Testament, that even where the death of Christ is especially regarded as sacrificial, it is looked upon not as *an isolated act*, but as the culmination of a life-sacrifice, an obedience *unto* death. Hence in I Peter ii. 24 we read: 'Who Himself bore our sins in His own body *to the tree*' (not *on* the tree as our version has it); the idea rather is that He carried the sins of humanity to the bitter end, until the sacrifice has been consummated by death." *The Historical Christ of St. Paul*, Expositor, Vol. II., Second Series, p. 144.

period with the virtue of an effective atonement. Patristic theology is particularly strong on this renewal of human nature by its new Head actually passing through its several stages, and that *without sin*. Irenæus is especially clear. "He did not set aside or pass beyond the human, nor annul the law of the human race in Himself, but He took up into Himself, and sanctified every age of human life through which He passed, through that likeness which it bore to Himself. For He came to save all—all, I say, who through Him are born again into God—infants, children, boys, youths, and men. Therefore, He passed through every age, and was made an infant for infants, sanctifying infants; and a child for children, sanctifying those being of this age, and at the same time being an example to them of the efficacy of piety, and of righteousness, and of subjection. He was made a youth for youths, being an example to the youth, and sanctifying them to the Lord. And in like manner, He became a man for men, that He might be a perfect Leader to all, not only in the way of setting forth the truth, *but in the way of actual being*, sanctifying, at the same time, the men, and being also an example to them." <sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Adv. Hær.* II. 22. De Pressensé gives clear expression to the same thought: "The holy life of Jesus bears, from its commencement to its close, a redemptive character, because it is one

This Life was human life after its Divine idea and plan—the Archetypal Life. Christ has interpreted for us the true meaning and end of our life by Himself living it without spot or stain—the Divine will, consciously and freely, the law of man's being; nullified by the first Adam, recognized and realized by the Second.

But sin was more than this principle of universal corruption. It was as well the principle of physical disorder ending at last in death, temporal and eternal. The ruin went deeper than man's moral relations and time-life. The redemption must go deeper and further. Our second Head follows here the ill for-

long sacrifice of obedience and love. Human life is thus restored to its normal condition; thenceforward the bitter consequences of the fall freely accepted, are transformed in acts of reparation; wherever the first Adam introduced rebellion, the Son of Man, the Head of the new race, substitutes entire submission and perfect holiness; He brings reconciliation out of the punishment itself; for, while we who have merited it must needs endure it, He voluntarily accepts it, and submits Himself to it, thus raising it to the height of a holy sacrifice. He restores the harmony between God and man, and reunites the moral link which was broken at the fall. Therefore, that which is of the highest import in the ministry of Jesus, is neither the contest with His enemies nor even the education of His apostles, but His life itself—that human life, like that of other men, save for the defilement of sin, but transformed into one continual sacrifice. ‘My meat and My drink,’ He said, ‘is to do the will of Him that sent Me.’ This is the motto and the epitome of His whole career.” *Jesus Christ, His Times, Life and Work*, p. 319.

tunes of the bad leadership of the first. The Victor over sin in the wilderness and in the garden, sinks Himself on Calvary's blood-stained hill-top under the power of death, in order to spring the laws of life over the realms of death. The contemplation of that death in its sacrificial light follows.

Meanwhile, note how the Litany, our inheritance from the ages of faith, tried in the fires, still recited on bended knees, devoutly ascribes atoning merit to every act of our Lord's Life, from the depths of the womb to the heights of heavenly glory:

“By the mystery of Thy holy Incarnation;  
By Thy holy Nativity and Circumcision;  
By Thy Baptism, Fasting and Temptation;  
By Thine Agony and Bloody Sweat;  
By Thy Cross and Passion;  
By Thy precious Death and Burial;  
By Thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension;  
And by the coming of the Holy Ghost:  
In all time of our tribulation;  
In all time of our wealth;  
In the hour of death;  
And in the day of judgment,  
Good Lord, deliver us.”



XI.

The Life of Self-Abnegation: The Great  
Sacrifice.

“O world ! behold upon the tree  
Thy Life is hanging now for thee,  
Thy Saviour yields His dying breath;  
The mighty Prince of glory now  
For thee doth unresisting bow  
To cruel stripes, to scorn and death.

“Draw near, O world ! and mark Him well;  
Behold the drops of blood that tell  
How sore His conflict with the foe:  
And hark ! how from that noble heart  
Sigh after sigh doth slowly start,  
From depths of yet unfathomed woe.”

## XI.

### The Life of Self-Abnegation: The Great Sacrifice.

*"I AM the Good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. I lay down My life for the sheep."*—ST. JOHN X. 11, 15.

*"None the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."*—HEB. XIII. 20, 21.

ORIENTAL shepherd-life furnished the groundwork for this beautiful allegory, second only to that of the "Vine and its branches." That life was unique. It was so in two particulars at least: the shepherd's complete identity with his sheep: his devotion and almost personal sympathy. He lived with them and for them. On that memorable night of the world's new-birth in its Saviour's Advent, the shepherds, we are told, were "*abiding*" with their flocks (St. Luke ii. 8). To him they were something like children. He learned to know and love

them, each by its own name; was ready at any time, night or day, to put himself between them and danger; quick not only to imperil but even "lay down" his life to rescue them.

A touching incident from the life of Israel's shepherd-king furnishes an example of just such prompt, self-forgetful action. Stirred by Goliath's braggart defiance of "the armies of the living God," David offered to meet him single-handed and alone. Against the royal remonstrance that he is but a beardless youth, it was thought enough to relate this act of personal heroism and prowess. "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear" (I Samuel xvii. 34-36). Faint picture this of the true David, who, going further, says this of Himself, "The good Shepherd *giveth* His life for the sheep."

That old pastoral life was besides a picture of marvellous devotion. There was here a sort of family-life—oneness of sympathy and interest on a low plane: love, care, provision, direct attention, personal exposure to danger to a singular degree,

and for what we are wont to regard as dumb, unreciprocal brutes. Our occidental methods in this direction furnish nothing like it. We turn sheep into an enclosure to browse at will, unthought of and unattended. It is, then, hardly possible for us to understand the well-nigh personal identification which, in oriental lands, subsisted between the shepherd and his sheep; and, for this reason, all the harder to enter into the spirit and scope of this metaphor, taking on the lips of our blessed Lord the sweet note of that deeper love that counted not dear the sacrifice of His life to rescue man from sin and death.

Israel was a pastoral people of old. From its earliest settlement, Palestine was alive with flocks. The old progenitor was himself rich in them. Ignorant of any near relationship, the brethren of Joseph, said to the Egyptian lord: "Thy servants are *shepherds*, both we and also our fathers" (Gen. xlvii. 3). And this continued true of their descendants down the centuries. Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Israel's greatest heroes, had all been shepherds. The universal occupation, it was the one source of wealth.

Of course, this pastoral life entered into the structure of Holy Scripture. Prophecy and psalms alike abound in its imagery. Strange, indeed, had this not been so. Outward scenery, every-day oc-

cupations, familiar incidents and habits, suggest to different people their different conceptions of God with aptest and happiest illustrations.<sup>1</sup> How full of nature and common life are the sacred books of the Hebrews.

Palestine is a mountainous country; and, as was perfectly natural, mountains hold a conspicuous place throughout these ancient Scriptures. Could the old poet of the Exodus—stout of heart for daring deeds—have been more felicitous in expressing his idea of God's eternity of Being—the very suggestion of his grand and stable surroundings—"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God" (Ps. xc. 2).

How largely the common life of this people—descendants of shepherds, themselves shepherds—enters into their sacred literature. It may be that actual scene, some faithful shepherd leading forth his flocks to the hill-sides, suggested to Christ's own

<sup>1</sup> In the perfect naturalness of His language there comes out a strong proof of the Divinity of Christ, all the stronger because incidental and undesigned. "*As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father*" (St. John x. 15); again, "*As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you*" (xv. 9). How familiarly He talks of heavenly relations! One who was not Himself "from above" could hardly have conceived of such a comparison. It was quite impossible to the purely human imagination.

mind this image of a Guardianship more tender, and of a Self-abnegating life more thorough and complete. Commentators are fertile in such hints, linking the Lord's words to some immediate occasion. The life, habits, thoughts of the people furnish a deeper ground.

The figure itself is as old as their Scriptures. Sacred writers—historians, psalmists, prophets—are full of it. It is the ever-recurring image of Divine provision, interest, and care. The psalm beginning, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want," is familiar to every mind, and has enriched the Psalmody of all ages, lands, and languages. Isaiah says, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom." Ezekiel recites in similar language this same provident interest: "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." And, as indicating the brunt of peril sometimes to be encountered, Zechariah exclaims: "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man that is My Fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered"—in its profoundest sense, taken to be truly Messianic, and thus appropriately

made the first of the morning lessons for Passion Sunday.

In the minds of the sacred writers, then, it would seem, this shepherd-life was itself but the shadow of a substantial and eternal Reality. To the mind of Christ it is the very shadow of the Cross—the symbol of sympathy to complete Self-sacrifice.<sup>2</sup> How strange the attitude He assumes toward the dark necessity involved in that prophetic figure! It is without a parallel in the previous history of the world. No other writer or speaker ever dreamed of centring in himself personally the full sacrificial sense of that old shepherd-life so freely standing for life endangered. It is to Him alone a clear intimation of the necessity of one man dying for the rest, and that the whole race perish not (St.

<sup>2</sup> “Of all the images of Christ this,” says Canon Westcott, “is that which has ever appealed most forcibly to the universal instincts of men. It has been illustrated by art: it has been consecrated by history. When believers first sought to write the symbols of their faith upon the walls of the catacombs they drew Christ as a Shepherd. And that earliest figure has never passed away from us. Many who care little for painting must have hung with affection over the picture in which the Saviour is shown patiently and lovingly disentangling the lamb from the thorns by which it is imprisoned and torn. All that we can imagine of tenderness, of endurance, of courage, of watchfulness, of devotion is gathered up in the thought of the pastoral charge; and that charge Christ has taken over us.” *The Revelation of the Father*, p. 78.



John xi. 50). And, strangest thing of all, He directly associates Himself<sup>3</sup> with the inlying sacrificial thought, in entirety of Self-devotion, in widest compass. How emphatic, yet how calm and broad the assertion! "I AM the Good Shepherd. I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold"—His death, in His own survey, sweeping the utmost limits of mankind, and of time.

The declaration is to be taken in a *personal*, and not merely pedagogic, sense. True, in those olden times, the shepherd *led* his flock forth to the rich pastures. In this particular, oriental life has changed none in the long lapse of the centuries. Shepherds do still lead the way, and the sheep follow. This side of the pastoral office had its Divine application. A few passages will suffice. "The Lord is my Shepherd: He *leadeth* me in the paths of righteousness." "*Guided* His own people in the wil-

<sup>3</sup> "Nothing is too great, nothing too exalted, nothing too mysterious for Him to associate with His Person and His Work. With 'masterful completeness and symmetry' He blends all the teaching of the past in one harmonious testimony to Himself. He does not deign to justify this attitude on His part, or to vouchsafe a syllable of explanation. He simply asserts, or sanctions, or unfolds, as the case may be, the application of past events to Himself. Simply, without effort, without exaggeration, He makes these marvellous declarations." Maclear, *Evidential Value of the Holy Eucharist*, p. 166.

derness like a flock." "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that *leadest* Joseph like a flock." "I am the Lord thy God . . . which *leadeth* thee by the way that thou shouldest go."

An old and familiar title applied to the Christian minister still carries along this idea of the need of wise spiritual leadership among men. In the minds of people generally, he is not a Rector, one in the narrow sense of rulership set to order the services of God's house, but more and closer a great deal, a Pastor, the leader in holy ways, the teacher in righteousness, the personal guide in seasons of spiritual doubt and perplexity, the loving, sympathizing friend in sickness and sorrow. Mere instruction in religious truths and duties exhausts the present, but not by any means the original and primary, sense of the pastoral office. In our placid times, no thought of peril and far less of self-sacrifice, as the old shepherds of Israel had sometimes to stand for their life when the wolf and the robber came down on the fold, enters into its conception.

How far is this weak modern sense of the office from exhausting the title as Self-appropriated and Self-applied by Christ! True, Christ was a teacher; rather, be it said, *the* Master among men. But need of instruction was not all. The evil of sin was not alone intellectual obliquity. The cure is not alone

more *light*, surer guidance, clearer thoughts about God, plainer statements of duty, profounder philosophy of human life, brighter example of godly conduct. The Saviourhood of Christ had to, and did go beyond the simple purpose of "a lamp unto man's feet and a light unto his path" (Ps. cxix. 105). The naked word of God is that; but Christ was the *incarnate* Word. To be to man all the entirety of his nature demanded, a full and complete rescue from sin, its shame and guilt, its weakness and woe, that Saviourhood had to strike at "death," intellectual and moral, temporal, spiritual and eternal. For this was needed a delivering Act: Life standing for life forfeited; an atonement for sin made at the expense of the Sacrifice.

Deeds, not words, make a man, and all his power. Not any word of Christ separately from His Person; not His Sermon on the Mount, full of the sublimest morality, bristling with a principle of self-abnegation that flies in the face of the selfishness of our nature and our times; not His profounder discourses reported by the apostle who stood by divine election nearest the beating heart of the world's new Life, full "of the wisdom which cometh from above"; not those marvellous sayings which held multitudes spell-bound when first uttered, and still hold and lead the thought of the world; not His unstudied words as He

wandered up and down the sea-coast of Galilee, or stood by the grave of a friend silent in death, and mighty enough to make the cold heart beat again warm and full with responsive action; not any of these, either singly or collectively taken, constituted Mary's Son the world's Good Shepherd and only Saviour; but the wonderful deeds of that mighty Champion of fallen humanity, going into the terrible battle to apparent defeat; and yet to glorious and everlasting victory.

The great Shepherd was Himself no stranger to the sacrifice of life involved in this rescue of the race from its self-wrought ruin. No mere man can read the horoscope of the future. An impenetrable veil hides from his view the events coming even with the coming day. Prevision is no human prerogative. Privilege it certainly could not be. It is only a merciful provision that we know not what the future has in store for us. Horace writes in one of his beautiful odes: "A wise deity shrouds in impenetrable night the events of the future."<sup>4</sup> And Shakespeare affirms that could any one clearly scan the Book of Fate:

"The happiest youth, viewing his progress through,  
What perils past, what crosses to ensue,  
Would shut the book, and sit him down and die."

Yet Christ had foreknowledge of all that awaited

<sup>4</sup> "Prudens futuri temporis exitum  
Caliginosa nocte premit deus."—Hor. *Odes*, iii. 29.

Him, and holy fortitude to face it. At different times and in different ways He foreshadowed His tragic end,—more, He plainly announced it. Evidence of the clear anticipation of His dark fate stands among His earliest words, spoken amid that horrid scene of temple-desecration that met His eye on His first visit after His Baptism in the Jordan. The sacred courts are cleared of the profane traffickers by a single look and word of holy and resistless indignation. Challenged to show His authority for such summary procedure, He makes no other than this strange reply: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”—compass My death, and in three days its power shall be broken. Later on it came to view, that these enigmatical words contained for His own mind a clear and distinct reference to His violent death. This explanatory sentence is added by the author of the fourth Gospel: “But He spake of the temple of His body” (St. John ii. 21). Thus, from the very beginning the dismal end was clear to Himself.<sup>5</sup> Yet how calm, how courageous, and how confident!

Evidence to the same effect is furnished in the next incident recorded—the private interview of Nicodemus with Christ. Remarkable for many rea-

<sup>5</sup> “How clearly did He see the future from the beginning! How deep a consciousness had He of the way and goal of His life and death, what an insight into the whole plan and counsel of His Father!” Stier, *Words of the Lord Jesus*, Vol. I., p. 77.

sons, it certainly is so for the wonderful parallel drawn by Christ between the curative virtue of the colossal serpent in the wilderness, and His own sacrificial and atoning relation to mankind, plunged in sin, misery and death. He sees in that conspicuous object of Divine mercy a prophetic symbol of the greater deliverance linked to His person and death, "and with the same life-giving issue." "*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life*" (St. John iii. 14, 15). By the side of this clear and definite prediction of His dark fate place this other equally emphatic declaration—emphatic as to its violent character, and the extent of its redemptive purpose: "And I, if I be *lifted up from the earth*, will draw all men unto Me" (St. John xii. 32). As to the full import of these words when first uttered, the contemporary and biographer of the Speaker leaves us in no uncertainty whatever. It is parenthetically added: "This He said, signifying *what death He should die.*"<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Of this tremendous assertion, utterly unlike anything that ever fell from the lips of men, Maclear says: "No difference between ancient and modern modes of speech, no distinction between the idioms of the East and West will account for it. 'It will not bear honest translation into any modern phrase that would enable good men to use it now.' Imagine the best, the

The same foresight of His dark future is expressed in the memorable discourse in the Synagogue at Capernaum. How strange the method He took to relieve the minds of the disciples of John Baptist exercised about the austerities of their master and the milder treatment of His own! It is no time for gloom, He plainly tells them, while the friends have the bridegroom with them, and they hear his voice. The time for sorrow and sadness is only "*when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them*" (St. Luke v. 35). "The shadow of a painful vision," says Godet. "In this striking and poetic answer, Jesus evidently announces His violent death."

But the violence of His *taking away* comes out not only in such intimations and allusions, which we have no space to dwell on in detail, but also in plain and direct statement. "Then Jesus took unto Him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go unto Jerusalem, and *all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished*. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and

wisest, the holiest we ever heard of saying, 'When ye shall have lifted Me up upon My cross, then shall ye know that I AM!' It is sacrilege to imagine such an ascription. But no one thinks of it as a sacrilege on His lips. From thence it falls naturally and with a calm simplicity which is more easily felt than described." *Ecidential Value of the Holy Eucharist*, p. 168.

they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death; and the third day He shall rise again" (St. Luke xviii. 31-33).<sup>7</sup> "I *lay down* My life for the sheep" (St. John x. 15). To Christ Himself the Cross was no cruel surprise; but "the consummation of the ages"—the *One sacrifice* to which all the incipient and minor ones came, in the end, to their last sense and meaning.

Doubtless, the sacrificial idea is the prominent fact in the ancient Scriptures—the *best* blood of the *best* bullock or lamb standing for the sin of a man's soul. They shape themselves, from first to last, after

<sup>7</sup> Noting particularly the gradation in these intimations of the Passion, Maclear strongly asks: "What weaver of a mythical narrative would ever have thought of introducing this gradation, or if he had thought of introducing it, would have been able to have preserved it with such artlessness and simplicity? We have only to estimate the overwhelming difficulties attending any attempt to give a consistent and harmonious account of so unparalleled a fact as the prediction by any one *of his own death* to perceive how utterly impossible it is that such a narrative could have been the result of design or imagination. But the difficulties are immeasurably increased when we find the prediction repeated, and each time under different circumstances and amidst varying details. To be able to represent the Utterer of such unique predictions on each occasion consistent with Himself, maintaining the same calmness, balance, and absence of all excitement, or exaggeration, heightening the picture each time with the addition of some minute feature, always in strict harmony with what had gone before, this is to produce a literary miracle to which nothing similar can be quoted in any age." *Ib.*, p. 180.



this sacrificial sense and pattern. Everywhere are priests and bleeding victims, from Abel's smoking altar where hasty jealousy lifted its fratricidal hand onward to "the Blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. xii. 24). This sanguinary element makes their inward sense and their outward scheme. Isaac's deliverance from the sacrificial blade by the ram divinely substituted for him; the redemption yearly commemorated by the Passover lamb; burnt-offerings and sin-offerings, day by day; and, more than all besides, the great day of Atonement by specific priestly act gathering up and carrying through the veil, and to definite issue, an expiatory service, altogether extraordinary and unique, inclusive of the entire nation—these all, incipient and incomplete in themselves, looked forward to and came at last to their full atoning significance in the awful tragedy of Calvary. In every particular the ritual of that Great Day was prophetic.\*

\* "All," writes Canon Medd, "spoke, in striking and varied ways, of One who was to come; of One who should be at once 'Himself the Victim and Himself the Priest,' at once *The Lamb of God, without blemish and without spot*, and the one true and only and abiding Priest, the true Aaron and the true Melchizedek, in whose One Offering of Himself, made *once for all*, 'single and complete,' this whole elaborate and complicated, this burdensome, yet highly significant and expressive, system should be completely fulfilled and realized; its whole substance and essential purpose absolutely secured for ever; so completely, so abso-

Quite clear is it, that in Christ's own forecasting mind, His violent death was held to be the actual substance of all that had thus, in the way of sacrificial shadow, gone before. So, too, the great unnamed author of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "But now once at the end (*consummation*) of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (ix. 26).<sup>9</sup>

Unquestionably the Holy Scriptures, earlier and later, shape themselves after this sacrificial idea—one standing for others, giving up His life for others, suffering the just for the unjust. But we come to no right sense of the *necessity* of Christ's sufferings and death in seeing in them the fulfilment simply of all Scriptural precedents and prophecies. The question still returns upon us, why *did* they, and why *had* they to take on that inexorable form? For, it is easily seen that if the Scriptures

lutely, as to render its longer actual continuance first needless and then mischievous; while the standing record of its divinely-ordained, though only temporary, provisions, was still preserved in the inspired volume of the Pentateuch, to teach the abiding principles which underlay them, and to point for ever, as the Christian student sees it to point, to Him who is the sum and substance of them all; and so to throw a most instructive and always needed light on the whole redemptive work of the Christ, in principle and in detail, and so on the divinely-ordained constitution and usages of the Catholic Church." *The One Mediator*, pp. 243, 244.

<sup>9</sup> *Westminster Version.*

only made the passion and death of Christ a dark necessity, they might have been so framed after a different scheme as to have made a different method of salvation possible.

In fact, the necessity of the Cross lay back of the Scriptures—in the antecedent work and power of sin. This is declared plainly enough by the risen Lord to the two disciples, whom He joined on their walk to Emmaus, so much perplexed and disconcerted by the crucifixion: "*Ought not* Christ to have suffered these things *in order* to enter into His glory" (St. Luke xxiv. 26)?

Death followed sin—its inexorable issue. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," was the original dissuasive. Sin came, and death by sin; and by death the Atonement as well must come, to be itself full and adequate. To break effectually its power, the One undertaking the Atonement must pass Himself under its yoke. Die He must in order to bring life and immortality to the mortal race for which He stood (II Tim. i. 10). And, therefore, the Cross.

However, in themselves considered, suffering and death have no atoning virtue. This is easily enough seen in the cruel death of the martyrs. And it is quite possible to conceive of the passion and death of Christ being no more efficacious. They are such

only because of the infinite condescension in which they started and the glorious triumph for which in the end they make room. He lays down His life that He may take it again under more glorious form. "It was necessary that He should die, since only in that way could He reach the perfect consummation of His mediatorial office, and become thus qualified in full to impart life and immortality to the world."

Looking into the *nature* of this Self-sacrifice three things merit special attention.

It started in the love of God. Whether human or Divine, love always seeks out and gives its best; holds not back from its costliest expression. It was an infinite sacrifice the loving Father made for the good of our apostate race. On its human side we know something of the love a father bears his son—what personal comforts and home necessities are surrendered so as to see him by education and moral training thoroughly qualified for a noble career. "The best of fathers," says another, "are but little windows compared with God." Through them we see some little of Him,—but, after all, how little of His love who "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. viii. 32). Well might that bosom Son of God Himself exclaim: "God so loved the world"—the little expletive giv-

ing both intensity and depth of meaning, measureless like the boundless and unsounded ocean. "So loved the world"—so divinely, so almightily—"that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (St. John iii. 16). Says the beloved disciple: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us" (I John iii. 16). Says the apostle of the Gentiles: "God commendeth His *love* towards us, in that, while we were yet *sinners*, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8).

What an enormous perversion of Holy Scripture that theory of the Atonement which makes it start in "God's displeasure and wrath against sinners!" Away with the unworthy thought! It is but a frightful misrepresentation of the character of the merciful and loving Father. It is a distortion of holy truth and infinite compassion!

And with the Son Himself love was the sole and moving cause. What it cost the heart of this Good Shepherd to care for the human world all astray, "like sheep on the dark mountain!" What it cost Him in the way of Self-humiliation! He was the Son of the Highest; one with God Himself; one in essence—"I and My Father are one" (St. John x. 30), He says; one in wisdom—"in whom,"

says St. Paul, "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3); one in power—"all things were made by Him" (St. John i. 3), says the fourth evangelist; heaven's Prince; the adored of angels and archangels; yet all this celestial companionship, honor, worship, glory (Phil. ii. 6-8), He laid aside, and put Himself within the limits of time and earthly relations so as to make provision for our eternal welfare.

What it cost Him in the way of actual suffering! It has been a matter of human speculation, whether or not Christ bore in His own person all the suffering which the whole world otherwise must have borne. The matter may be dismissed, as in no way making an essential element in His one atoning work. Suffice it to say, that every feature of the struggle shows it to have been a course of great physical, and more mental, suffering, at last ending in a death of untold agony on the cross. What love! He flees not when danger is nigh. We have seen how the shepherd-boy *risked* his life to rescue a lamb (I Samuel xvii. 34-36). The "lion" and the "bear" do their worst on Him (Is. liii. 5), that we might escape. This Good Shepherd *gave* His life for those who hated Him. "Greater love," He said, "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (St. John xv. 13).

What, then, His Self-sacrifice but *love's* supreme ideal!

This appears still further in its perfect *voluntariness*. No necessity was laid on Him to undertake the work, and bear its load of woe. It sprang from a depth of sympathy and solicitude for a lost world that could no more hesitate to say: "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I *delight* to do Thy will, O My God" (Ps. xl. 7, 8), than a human mother close her heart against her sick and suffering child. In His wonderful career, nothing so extraordinary and conspicuous, as the perfect spontaneity of action resting in the perfect coincidence of His will with the will of the Father. Hear Him: "I lay down My life for the sheep; I lay it down of *Myself*; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Once more: "I do always those things that please the Father" (St. John viii. 29; x. 15, 18).

Besides being perfectly voluntary, this Self-sacrifice was truly vicarious; made in behalf of others; and for the good of others—for a world of immortal beings lying under the power and curse of sin. To meet its penalty and do away its guilt was the work of the Son of God in the flesh; was the mystery of Bethlehem; was Gethsemane's agony; was Calvary's expiring cry, "It is finished"—a full ex-

piation for sin; the redemption of *mankind* in its generic sense and comprehension.<sup>10</sup>

"The Good Shepherd" stood for humanity in its broadest compass and strangest diversities; not merely risking, but actually *laying down* His life in its saving behalf. On His sacred lips, this singularly appropriate epithet expresses Christ's clear consciousness of a truly vicarious and atoning character serving the human world in highest stead in its grave peril by reason of sin. Theories of the Atonement are nothing. The *fact* of the Atonement, in its general sense, as that stood in the mind of the great Atoner, is everything. His meaning, then, is not far to seek, when He directly applies to Himself all that is said of the true and faithful shepherd in his lower position.

Of whatever comes up to the fullest measure of excellence, we are wont to say, "It is the *beau* ideal." Here, the antithesis lies not between faithfulness and faithlessness, as such, but between the Substance of the shepherd's office and the mere shadows of it

<sup>10</sup> Of this vicarious and organic sense of Redemption this Eucharistic language is the fullest expression: "All glory be to Thee, Almighty God, our heavenly Father, for that Thou, of Thy tender mercy, didst give Thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption; who made there (by His one oblation of Himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." Communion Office, *Book of Common Prayer*.



that had gone before: between its perfect realization now in the Person of Christ and the imperfect patterns which hitherto had only appeared. With the word "good" in this allegory it is the same precisely as with the word "true" in that of the Vine. It carries with it the idea of absolute completeness and adequacy for its own redemptive ends. It is not the "good" over against the bad shepherds as such—the fleeing "hirelings"—but expresses rather the full Personal Reality at last of all that in the pastoral life of ancient Israel had stood out only in partial and imperfect specimens.<sup>11</sup> Hence the force of the article "THE Shepherd"—ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός—the true, the genuine, the model Shepherd, *personally*—ἐγὼ εἰμι—adequate to every demand on the office itself a lost world may make. "The good Shepherd giveth His life *for the sheep*."

Here, in heroic action, is the *beau idéal* of Self-sacrifice: a perfect sympathy for mankind working

<sup>11</sup> Canon Westcott makes this just comment: "The exact form of the expression, *I am the Shepherd, the good* (Shepherd), carries back the thought to others who partially and imperfectly discharge the office which Christ discharges completely. Christ is not only the true Shepherd, who fulfils the idea of the shepherd, but He is the good Shepherd who fulfils the idea in its attractive loveliness." *Bible Comm. in loc.* "All others, it is implied, are but vain shadows, and imperfect resemblances of Him." Dean Burgon, *Plain Comm. in loc.*

out the perfect remedy—an interest in, a love of, a fidelity to others, which even the gloom of Gethsemane and the foreknowledge of the Cross could neither shake, nor swerve a single hair's breadth from its gracious purpose. Here is THE LIFE that dares throw itself into the very jaws of death, "that through death" this same resurgent Life "might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). "*Giveth His life* for the sheep." <sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Better, "*layeth down His life.*" The expression is only to be found in St. John's writings (x. 11, 15, 17, 18; xiii. 37, 38; xv. 13; I John iii. 16). Whatever its distinctive meaning, in verse fifteen Christ, with all the emphasis of a personal act, applies it to Himself: "*I*"—the grand exponent of free, spontaneous action—"lay down *My* life." Some Biblical scholars, Godet, Westcott, Ellicott, see in it a reference only to the *voluntariness* of Christ's death—as *freely* giving up even life itself for others as, with His own hands, laying aside (*τίθεις τὰ ἱμάτια*, St. John xiii. 4) His garments to perform a menial service upon the person of His disciples. Complete freedom certainly was an essential feature in the great Atonement, as we have already seen. Anything like force or constraint would have effectually destroyed its redemptive character. And hence, the plain assertion of verse 18, "*No man*"—not even the Father—"taketh it from Me; *I* lay it down of Myself." Others, Hengstenberg, Meyer, Wordsworth, Stier, Olshausen, with a profounder view of its sacrificial sense, see a reference to the *deposit* made, the ransom-price (Is. liii. 10)—money given, or sacrifice offered to redeem another from punishment or peril. It would seem, then, that the *atoning* character of His death was plainly in the mind of Christ: "*I pay the price of the world's ransom freely*" (Wordsworth).

“There is a green hill far away,  
Without a city wall,  
Where the dear Lord was crucified,  
Who died to save us all.

“We may not know, we cannot tell,  
What pains He had to bear,  
But we believe it was for us  
He hung and suffered there.”

It is but a weak and frivolous emptying of their deepest meaning, the explanation given by Unitarians to these words of our Lord. They tell us, His martyr-death so cruelly meted out, so calmly and patiently met, was only to set the *seal of truth* to what He taught!<sup>13</sup> Only for the confirmation of His doctrines all that suffering and woe? How the base thought eviscerates the blessed Gospel of the Son of God! How the assertion stands in flat contra-

“This passage is important, inasmuch as, at any rate, it must be classed with those in which Christ Himself *points* to His sacrificial death” (Olshausen).

<sup>13</sup> “Meagre explanation of these words,” exclaims Robertson, “which satisfies Unitarians, who say that Christ died as a martyr in attestation of the truths He taught!” Only put the lax teaching of these modern heresiarchs along side of the “uncontaminated orthodoxy of an Apostolic Father.” See the contrast! Clemens Romanns (A. D. 97)—“one of the most celebrated names of Christian antiquity”—writes in his epistle to the Corinthians. “In love the Lord redeemed us: because of that love which He had for us, Christ our Lord, by the will of God, *gave His blood for us, and flesh for our flesh, and life for our life.*” I Epistle, § 49.

diction to the words themselves! Most emphatically He declares, His self-sacrifice was *for the sheep*; for redemptive purpose, and not for His doctrines in any way. Only for what the sin-imperilled world and not anything He had at stake, He laid down His life on the cross. What no man, before or since, be he prophet, philosopher, leader of thought, founder of religion, wild enthusiast ever dreamed of doing, He did—put a *sacrificial* value on His life, suiting the action to the word. Here was the old sacrificial habit of thought by which He was ever connecting Himself with the ancient ritual, or allowing Himself to be connected with it.<sup>14</sup>

There follows necessarily the *comprehensive, world-embracing character* of the great sacrifice. “Other sheep I have which are not of this fold.” The vision of the Good Shepherd sweeps the whole realm of hu-

<sup>14</sup> “The Lamb of God” (St. John i. 29), the Personal appropriation in full of the symbolic character of the brazen serpent (St. John iii. 14, 15), the violent “taking away” of the Bridegroom (St. Luke v. 35), still more emphatic and direct, the life-giving virtue of His *flesh and blood* (St. John vi. 53, 54). To these join the Eucharistic Institution of the last Passover in perpetual remembrance of His death, and the sacrificial phraseology following—Christ the true Passover (I Cor. v. 7; Rom. iii. 25; Heb. ix. 14), the sufferings of “the Just for the unjust” (I Pet. iii. 18), Himself bearing the sins of the world (I Pet. ii. 24), “Ransom for all” (I Tim. ii. 6), the Sacrifice with perennial efficacy—“*once for all*” (Heb. x. 10; ix. 28), the Lamb slain (Rev. v. 6, 9), the slain Lamb enthroned in glory and accorded perpetual homage (Rev. v. 12)—and we have a catena on the sole sacrificial meaning of His language here which can be neither despised nor denied.

manity. No narrow boundaries, whether barriers of birth or foolish conceits of philosophy, hedge around His saving power. How inveterate and stubborn race-prejudices! What "a wall of partition" they build up between man and man! How long it has taken even our modern world to recognize the brotherhood of mankind! In the face of an obstinate servitude which disappeared only through the fearful ravages of civil war, we certainly have no room whatever to blame the Hebrew people for their national and narrow race-antipathies. In fact, what causes, leaping up through the centuries, had given them reason for regarding themselves as the special favorites of heaven, and thus casting out all other peoples from their spiritual sympathy.

Now, however, the hour had struck for the end of all such special favoritism. It was the world's high noon. God is to be known henceforth "as no respecter of persons." Station, rank, color, condition—these are nothing. The race is one family in the sight and love of the same Father; in the mercy of the same Shepherd and Sacrifice. Out of many nations *one flock*; not *fold*, according to the authorized version. Fold is a narrow and exclusive idea, utterly foreign to our Lord's meaning and mission. That careless translation is clearly wrong; and, doubtless has contributed, in no small degree, to that intolerant exclu-

sivism on the side of the Roman see, and that denominational narrowness which, after the spirit of modern sectism, arrogates to itself the whole grace of salvation. "One flock": the Church of all countries, through all ages, Holy and Catholic, under the one "Shepherd and Bishop of souls." "Holy Catholic Church! One and Universal; the Church of apostles and martyrs, of fathers and confessors; in catacombs and in prisons, in deserts and caves of the earth, in palaces and cathedrals, in exile and in missions, in all ages, the one flock of God, the Church of the past, the Church of the present, the Church of the future, chanting ever the same faith, holding ever the same Christ, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end!"

"There *shall become* one flock, one Shepherd." Not an issue reached in a year, or a decade, or a century; but the consummation of the Christian ages, the vast problem of a living, and aggressive Christianity, the last glorious result of the "Spirit of Missions."

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

XII.

The Personal Principle of the Resurrection.

“Lo, the gates of death are broken,  
And the strong man armed is spoiled,—  
Of his armor, which he trusted,  
By the Stronger Arm despoiled.  
Vanquished is the prince of hell,  
Smitten by the Cross he fell.”

*Mortis portis fractis, fortis.*

Peter the Venerable, 1092.



## XII.

### The Personal Principle of the Resurrection.

*“Jesus said unto her, I AM the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”—ST. JOHN XI. 25.*

*“I AM He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”—REV. I. 18.*

THIS is to be taken *redemptively*, as the most vital one of all the sublime Self-assertions of Christ. The greatest of the apostles makes no hesitation in declaring His resurrection to be the crowning act of His whole work in the flesh, that in which it comes at last to its own visible and glorious consummation. “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished” (I Cor. xv, 17, 18).

Of vital character to Christianity is the question touching the proper place and import of Christ’s resurrection in the scheme of redemption. Is it a necessary and constituent part of the work itself, or

merely an isolated fact, a grand demonstration, in some sort, of the Father's acceptance of His Son's work of love and mercy? Did it belong essentially to redemption as such, or nothing more than a glorious appendage, something following after as a brilliant finale?

Two considerations show the importance and pertinence of the question: an attempt to make the certainty of eternal life independent of this fact and unembarrassed by "the perilous arguments of critical erudition"; and, then, the emphasis laid by the general Christian mind upon the Cross as the *one* event carrying in itself, in a separate and exclusive way, the whole sense and compass of the Atonement with little or no thought of redemptive virtue attaching to what, in infinite condescension, had gone before and followed after in glorious triumph.

"The wages of sin is death." In the human world there is no more appalling fact. For one and all, prince and peasant, sinner and his Saviour, the one way out of the world is "the grave, and gate of death." All roads lead to it. All tracks point inward. Ever since the virgin soil was stained by the blood of righteous Abel, shed by a brother's envy, death has not stayed its pitiless, unsparing work. Without softness that eye, and only hardness that heart. It wears an iron visage. Love's hand brings no ade-

quate bribe; affluence buys no exemption. It owns no reverence for royal robes, and empties the throne of proudest king. Pomp, and place, and pride offer no barriers, poverty no repulsion. Beauty, and wit, and wisdom, and learning, and rank fall before the one levelling stroke. Amid a nation's tears and the world's deep sense of loss, the pen falls from the hand which wrote,

“There is a Reaper, whose name is Death,  
And, with his sickle keen,  
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,  
And the flowers that grow between.”

“One may live as a conqueror, a king, or a magistrate, but he must die as a man.”<sup>1</sup> As all fall, so fell the very Prince of Life. The Head dies with the members.

“The fashion of this world passeth away.” Everywhere is perpetual fluctuation, instability, change, restless succession. “One generation passeth away, and another cometh,” like successive waves beating on the shore. The old preacher’s “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity” comes nowhere into such realizing view as in the inconstancy and flux of historic life. Nothing affects us so sadly as the general vanity of life under this broader view. What vast changes have taken place in the political world! How many

<sup>1</sup> Among the last words of Daniel Webster.

dynasties have sunk into oblivion; how many powerful nations have passed away like fleeting shadows along the mountain-side; how many tongues have died out, or live only on the printed page!

Dead languages stand for dead nations. Who speak to-day, in its original purity and power, the language of Socrates, of Plato, of Demosthenes? Where are the cities and people of ancient Greece? New cities stand on the old sites, inhabited by a new and mongrel race. Where are the once populous cities of the Nile—Memphis with the forgotten builders of the colossal pyramids: Heliopolis with its obelisks and sun-worshippers: Karnak with its Great Hall and massive columns, said to be “the greatest of man’s architectural works”: Thebes with its hundred gates, and its temples next to Baalbek, the most magnificent in the world? Until recently buried beneath the sands of the desert—extensive excavations revealing acres of ruins in their imposing grandeur still mournful evidences of departed glory. Where are the luxurious cities of the East—Baalbek, Palmyra, and Babylon with its hanging gardens, monumental buildings, massive walls, and brazen gates? The mud villages of miserable Arabs stand on the ancient sites of once magnificent cities. What a satire all this on the greatness of man and the permanence of his work!

Every day the world is being new-peopled. Old faces pass from view, and new ones appear; other voices are heard on the street; old magistrates die, and other rulers gather up the reins of government. The new becomes old, and the old is ever vanishing!

How full of mournful lament over the evanescent character of life and man's inexorable fate is the word of God! "Lord, let me know my end, and the number of my days; that I may be certified how long I have to live. Behold, thou hast made my days as it were a span long, and mine age is even as nothing in respect of Thee; and verily every man living is altogether vanity. For man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain; he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them" (Psalm xxxix. 4-6). And so this old wail of Moses, "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood." A Spanish poem of real merit thus expresses the same mournful view.

"Our lives are rivers, gliding free  
To that unfathomed, boundless sea,  
The silent grave!  
Thither all earthly pomp and boast  
Roll, to be swallowed and lost  
In one dark wave.

“Thither the mighty torrents stray,  
Thither the brook pursues its way,  
And tinkling rill.  
There all are equal. Side by side  
The poor man and the son of pride  
Lie calm and still.”<sup>2</sup>

This earth is one vast Necropolis. Each and every moment, the living world is adding to its silent inhabitants. Life has one issue for all. And is this all? Does it end in “Sadducean vacuity and night?” Is, then, the grave the ultimate boundary of our being? nothing beyond? without a future? In this fragmentary, disjointed, evanescent and melancholy character both of man and his work do we find the full and only sense of life, its last scope and meaning? Is the broken column in our cemeteries to stand as the true symbol and expression of all it is in itself? Is incompleteness its inherent and inseparable property? no “perfect consummation and bliss” to round off its inevitable vexations, disappointments and sorrows? Is life the sum, or the cradle of our true being? death a finality, or but a means and entrance to a higher destiny.

We come now, thanks be to God, to no voiceless city of the dead; but “unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumer-

<sup>2</sup> *Coplas de Manrique*, translated by Henry W. Longfellow.

able company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." The dead, then, do yet live; and shall for ever live, kindred spirit united to kindred body. Though death wields an universal, it is a broken, sceptre. This great conqueror has been matched by a Greater. Outgoing footprints mark the grave. The Stronger has vanquished the strong man armed. Like another imprisoned Samson, our Leader and Lord of Life has broken down and borne away to the Eternal Hills the iron gate of death. Through all its silent chambers, sounds His Voice, who once was dead, but is now alive for evermore, Conqueror of death and Hades: "I AM the Resurrection and the Life"—the one personal principle and "power of an endless life." Is it a voice only—*vox et præterea nihil?*

How confident and bold the attitude in which Christ puts Himself towards this dark, appalling, inexorable fate of humanity! It is truly unique and exceptional. He stands here solitary and alone; superior to every other being. What other one—teacher, thinker, philosopher, founder of religion—ever dared or dreamed of laying claim to this power—carrying at his girdle "the keys of Hades and

death" (Rev. i. 18)? Others were content to reason, and speculate, and theorize about the state after death. Their relation is only pedagogic and tuitional, with approximate conception of the great truth, and hold upon it, more or less, firm.

There is something stupendous and really startling in Christ's attitude. Plainly enough, it is not pedagogic, pure and simple. He puts Himself not on the same plane here with the best teachers and masters of mankind; plays not the rôle of a prophet or philosopher, who by diligent thought and study has presumably mastered the mighty problem of the ages, and, in that way, held Himself quite competent to make the most confident dogmatic assertions. He comes not, saying: "I *tell* you the truth—that truth after which other master-minds were for long time only groping vainly in the dark." He faces the grave matter not as another Plato with only the small advantage of having penetrated the mystery a little deeper and come nearer the actual truth in the case. He does in no such way class Himself with the mere teachers of mankind, but is bold enough to go a great deal further than they ever presumed or thought of doing. He said this most stupendous thing, not pedagogically, but *personally*: "I AM the Resurrection," its eternal principle in widest form and force.



Rightly Addison, in his *Cato*, thus puts Plato's relation toward the after life of man:

"It must be so—Plato, thou *reasonest* well!—  
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,  
This longing after immortality?  
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,  
Of falling into nought? Why shrinks the soul  
Back on herself and startles at destruction?  
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;  
'Tis Heaven itself that points out an hereafter  
And intimates Eternity to man."<sup>3</sup>

Truly this great philosopher, the prophet of man's glorious future, "reasoned well."

Strong arguments, more or less satisfactory, he drew from the constitution of the soul, and man's composite nature as he read and defined it. Many good things, many fine things he wrote about the soul, its immateriality and immortality. Some of the finest passages seem almost to flow from the pen of inspiration, nor unworthy such high authorship. But the conviction deepens at every step, that it is the work simply of the philosopher stretching his mind into the darkness, feeling after the truth, if haply he might find it and bring it into day. Like the blind man in the Gospel, partially restored to sight and seeing "men as trees, walking," this fore-

<sup>3</sup> *Cato*, Act V., Scene 1.

most philosopher of the classic world, ahead of his age and nation, had no more than faint glimpses of the great truth. His position was relative, not absolute; the sphere of shadows, not eternal realities. It was not in his power, it is not in any man's power, to get beyond this merely tentative, experimental method. His trying to sound the depths profound is simply a guessing at the truth.

On this point, in the "Republic"—his perfect ideal of society—Plato thus reasons. "You admit that everything has a good and evil element; as ophthalmia is the evil of the eyes, and disease of the whole body; as mildew is of corn, and rot of timber, or rust of iron and steel: in everything, or almost everything, there is an inherent evil and disease. Anything which is infected by any of these evils is made evil, and at last wholly dissolves and dies. The vice and evil inherent in each is the destruction of each; and if this does not destroy them there is nothing else that will, for good certainly will not destroy them, nor, again, that which is neither good nor evil. If, then, we find any nature which having this inherent corruption cannot be dissolved or destroyed, we may be certain that of such a nature there is no destruction. Now consider the soul. Do the injustice and other evils of the soul waste and consume the soul? Do they by inhering in her and clinging to her, at last bring

her to death? Certainly not. The soul then which cannot be destroyed by evil, whether inherent or external, must exist for ever, and if existing for ever, must be immortal.”<sup>4</sup>

This is plausible *reasoning*, to say the least. But on a point so vital, what care we for the ratiocination of the philosopher, or any amount of arguments elaborated in that restless intellectual workshop—man’s brain. No Columbus *in search* simply of an actual spirit-world can bring anything like perfect confidence; but only One returned from that dark continent bearing back with Him the personal evidences of the Fact—the spoils of a mighty conquest, in a Life through death superior over death. The human soul wants conviction and certitude. And this great sage of antiquity, standing on the shore of time, did but peer thoughtfully into the great ocean of eternity and gave the world no more than the benefit of his *thoughts*, his *surmises*, his *reasoning*. In this foremost representative of early philosophy, pure reason is shown to be utterly incompetent to bring this mighty problem to a satisfactory solution.

Fresher arguments than the old philosopher employed, moving on the same plane, will serve no better purpose. By stupendous Fact, and not by mere human discovery is the knowledge here

<sup>4</sup> Plato’s *Best Thoughts*, Jowett’s Translation, pp. 411, 412.

which bringeth conviction and comfort. Plato and the Risen Lord occupy widely different ground. Toward the universal fact of death and the sober realities beyond, He put Himself in no purely speculative attitude. With simply abstract discussions His great Name was in no wise connected. He never employed the aid of human philosophy. He wasted no time on theories. He penned no Platonic line on the sublime theme. He wrote nothing. Nor, in common with Christian teachers ever since, did He *preach* the resurrection as a *doctrine*. Infinitely more here than preacher or philosopher—the very Principle, in fact, of the Resurrection; the Risen One by whom it has been actually brought to pass. It is *in* Him, not as a wonderful secret in the mind, but as strength in a giant's arm, for stupendous act, for heroic deed. It was by *abolishing death*, by fully demonstrating His superiority over it—that “He brought life and immortality to light”—the crowning act of the incarnate Mystery.

“*I AM the Resurrection and the Life.*” We take the marvellous declaration in a purely literal sense. “For as much then,” says the writer to the Hebrews in his clear grasp of the truth, “as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that

is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage." In His case, thus, death was no accident, but an absolute necessity. The problem of redemption required this very order and issue. Man's one outlet is His also. The dissolving order of sin makes the logic of events. His death and resurrection were inseparable links in the great chain of Divine mercy, let down to earth in His assumption of our nature, and again carried up to heaven in His triumphant return to His own native skies in His risen and glorified humanity, and so securely fastened to that immovable staple—the throne of the eternal Jehovah. His lowly birth was in order to His passion and death on the cross; His death and burial in order to His resurrection; and His resurrection in order to His full glorification at the right hand of the Father, in actual correspondence with His Priestly prayer: "*I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was*" (St. John xvii. 4, 5).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "The power of Christ's death to take away sin, its atoning and saving efficacy, is *always* conditioned in the New Testament by the fact of His resurrection, the victorious superiority of the law of life in Him as thus asserted over the law of sin and death. Without the resurrection the death could be of no account. It is His victory over the grave that gives significance to all His

And, as with His death on the cross, so with His glorious resurrection, it was not for Himself *alone*, but our dead and dying race. Humanity is one under the power of sin and death, and one again under the power of the resurrection. We are not separate units in this broad world. We are joined together in the bonds of a common kinship. A fellowship of origin and nature brings along a fellowship of sin and suffering and death. We were bound up in the misery and misfortunes of the same weak and fallen headship. By common descent we have come into the same sad inheritance. The natural relation is truly organic. "In Adam all died." We are one with him in sin and death because *in* him and *of* him. Not in any merely outward and tactual sense, like the poisoned shirt of Nessus, does his act of disobedience touch and affect the race for evil, but the

sufferings, and imparts to His blood the whole virtue by which it has become the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." "Only as sin, and death, and hell were first conquered in His person; only as the principle of life which was in Him became the actual presence of the resurrection, bringing the whole order of the world under His feet, and making room for His glory as a fact brought to pass in this way of victory and conquest; only as the powers of that higher life in the Spirit were first triumphantly asserted in the mediatorial glorification of Christ Himself, was it possible for any such state or condition of glory, any such reign or kingdom of salvation, to have real being at all for our fallen race." Dr. Nevin, *Jesus and the Resurrection*, Mer. Rev., 1861, pp. 177, 180.

virus flows in our very blood, forms the deepest power of our being, and so along all the line of natural descent sin and suffering and death are transmitted. Bound thus to all the past of humanity, we do, in a true and real sense, carry in us its future. We are parts of a great whole: members of one family; and wide apart as men's paths lie, all stretch on to a common goal.

In the love and mercy of God, we are bound up in the fortunes of a second and supernatural Headship. The Pauline Epistles are especially full of a generic redemption in the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and glorification of the Second Adam undoing the misery and death brought in by the first. "Even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is *death*" (I Cor. xv. 22. 26).

Hence the profound significance of His own grand utterance, "I AM the Resurrection and the Life." The Resurrection is *in* Him, not simply by and through Him. He is *personally* the bearer of fallen humanity, as in the agony of the garden and the horrors of the cross, so in the rest of the grave and the glory of His complete and eternal victory.

Not then for Himself alone that triumph. He does but lead the glorious way. It is, "I AM the Resurrection and the Life;" not I announce it, or I promise

it, or I guarantee it; but *in Me* as the one Living and Life-giving Lord and Leader of mankind.

“Not for Himself Christ rose that Easter morn,  
Not to Himself the Conqueror liveth now;  
Not that His head alone might wear the crowning,  
Placed He that diadem above His brow.

“For us He lives thro’ all the passing ages,  
Dropping through unclosed hands His gifts to men;  
The angel who records them on its pages  
Finds only loving deeds to us to pen.”

In this view our life is not the vain and shadowy thing it seems, and ordinarily is represented, to be. Death is the shadow and dream. As when one awaketh, that passes away. Life is an imperishable reality. In one sense, “a vapor,” as St. James says, “that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away”; in another and grander sense, an inextinguishable flame. O that our life redeemed, and transfigured for noblest uses, and glorified at length, might burn, as a Vestal lamp, before the throne of God for ever!

There is the deepest comfort in all this. The *brother* lives though sisters are overwhelmed with grief. Death destroys homes, but not home affections. It separates but severs not kindred hearts. Love lives on. Human ties are indissoluble. Christ’s own



words assure us, "that they have a living permanence in Him: that they survive the transitory sphere in which they have here found their growth: that they await a resurrection in which they shall be seen in their true glory."<sup>6</sup> And because these words contain "the certain promise that our love is not lost," the Church has put them in the forefront of its burial service to fall first of all on the ear when we bear to their last resting-place those whom we have loved.

*"I AM the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die."*

All this only goes to show the essential and vital nature of the Resurrection fact in anything like a full and proper view of Christ's person and work. It is not possible to magnify it. What, in this particular, is true of the Incarnation is no less true of the Resurrection. They are necessary and inseparable parts of the one scheme of grace. What the one in deepest humiliation began, the other carried onward and upward to its glorious consummation and crown.<sup>7</sup> Without the glad Easter triumph, all of

<sup>6</sup> Westcott's *Revelation of the Father*, p. 100.

<sup>7</sup> So the Proper Preface for Holy Communion upon Easter-day. "But chiefly are we bound to praise Thee for the glorious

hope and promise the Wonder of Bethlehem enshrined must have been naught but a miserable fiasco and failure: a beginning to build with no power to finish.

The fulness of redemption contemplated the totality of the race and the totality of our being: "our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in God's eternal and everlasting glory." And accordingly, He who descended into the lower parts of the earth, ascended far above all heavens—up even where He was before (Eph. iv. 10). And therefore, it is not without the deepest significance, that we hear this Champion and Leader in the dark and terrible struggle say,

*"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father."*

Only in this stupendous Fact do we come to the full Apostolic sense of the Gospel. No special familiarity with these writings is necessary to be assured of its essential and central significance. To those men of heroic faith and fortitude it was, in fact, the sum and substance of the Gospel; that in which ultimately it came to its own grand end and glorious achievement;

Resurrection of Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord: for He is the very Paschal Lamb, which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world; who by His death hath destroyed death, and, by His rising to life again, hath restored to us everlasting life." *The Book of Common Prayer.*

the pivotal thought in all their preaching; the one satisfactory explanation of their whole subsequent course. At the cross, their confidence suffered a complete collapse. They make no concealment of their utter disappointment. The night of despair settled down upon their poor souls. They do neither disguise nor condone their cowardice and deep dejection. Cravens and cowards before, they are, upon the resurrection of the crucified Lord, men of the most heroic mould, going forth under the power of this fresh and mighty fact to conquer the world for the Risen One.

It shapes at once the whole Apostolic idea of preaching. It gets the boldest enunciation. And the very first to lead off in this courageous course is the timid denier of Christ amid the closing tragic events. 'This man's bold Pentecostal sermon is a pattern of frank and outspoken truth followed by all as far as there is any record. How firm is St. Peter's grasp of the Gospel, and how full of courage these first words: "*Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: WHOM GOD HATH RAISED UP, HAVING*

LOOSED THE PAINS OF DEATH; BECAUSE IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE THAT HE SHOULD BE HOLDEN OF IT" (Acts ii. 22-24). Nor, upon the restoration of the lame man, is there any quailing before Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas: "*If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, WHOM GOD RAISED FROM THE DEAD, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole*" (Acts iv. 9, 10). Join to these this glowing passage from his first Epistle: "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope BY THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us*" (i. 3, 4), and we have the one theme of this bold apostle's public and uniform teaching.

St. Paul, the last called, and the grandest of them all, follows the line marked out by the preacher of Pentecost. Whether we turn to addresses or writings, the resurrection of Christ is seen to be a central and vital point. At Athens the main topic was "JESUS AND THE RESURRECTION." Nor there only; wherever his hurrying footsteps led him, his was emphatically the Gospel of the Resurrection. In

his bold defence before Agrippa, this is the account he gave of his own public ministration: "*Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come, THAT CHRIST SHOULD SUFFER, AND THAT HE SHOULD BE THE FIRST THAT SHOULD RISE FROM THE DEAD*" (Acts xxvi. 22, 23).

His matchless Epistles are full of this grand theme and completing sense of the Gospel. The fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians is classic on the subject: The resurrection of Christ necessary to and carrying with it the resurrection and full glorification of believers. How this old and complete sense of the Gospel rings out in these clarion notes:

*"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, WHEN HE RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, AND SET HIM AT HIS OWN RIGHT HAND IN HEAVENLY PLACES far above all principality, and power, and might,*

*and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."*

"THOU ART THE KING OF GLORY, O CHRIST.

THOU ART THE EVERLASTING SON OF THE FATHER.

WHEN THOU TOOKEST UPON THEE TO DELIVER MAN,

THOU DIDST HUMBLE THYSELF TO BE BORN OF A VIRGIN.

WHEN THOU HADST OVERCOME THE SHARPNESS OF DEATH,

THOU DIDST OPEN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TO ALL BELIEVERS.

THOU SITTEST AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,

IN THE GLORY OF THE FATHER.

WE BELIEVE THAT THOU SHALT COME TO BE OUR JUDGE.

WE THEREFORE PRAY THEE, HELP THY SERVANTS,

WHOM THOU HAST REDEEMED WITH THY PRECIOUS BLOOD.

MAKE THEM TO BE NUMBERED WITH THY SAINTS,

IN GLORY EVERLASTING."

XIII.

The Personal Principle of Salvation.

“Strange realms, wide waters o’er,  
The conquering Cross he bore;  
In her own Isle the Love-Queen he abash’d;  
Through Asian cities bright  
He poured the sweet strange light;  
Diana in her Ephesus he dashed.  
Greece glowed beneath his golden tongue;  
Full in Athenian ears their Unknown God he rung.

“Each rich Corinthian shrine  
Grew dim and undivine,  
Philippi heard the captor-captive’s song;  
O! ne’er from Grecian soul  
Such golden streams did roll;  
No Roman hand e’er smote, e’er built so strong.  
Temples fell down where’er he trod,  
And on from land to land stretched the one Church of God.”



### XIII.

#### The Personal Principle of Salvation.

*"And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I AM JESUS whom thou persecutest."*  
—ACTS IX. 4, 5.

*"But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee. . . . Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."*—ACTS XXVI. 16, 19.

IN the forefront of Apostolic Christianity stands the image of a marvellous character; not less marvellous in its earlier than later manifestations, in its astounding activities than its strangest contrasts. A man of honest convictions, there was the courage to own them and live them whatever dangers imperilled his course. In the broad diversity so conspicuous in object, purpose, untiring effort, indomitable energy, dauntless spirit, one thing stamps it with self-consistency throughout—straightforward and invariable conscientiousness; whether bent on

the persecutor's sanguinary purpose, or on holy apostle's winged<sup>1</sup> way to different lands with the new Master's message of life and salvation. In blind and erroneous zeal not less than in clearest and hardest duty, he furnished the noblest example of fearlessness and faithfulness on record. For ill-directed zeal he makes the honest apology: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts xxvi. 9).

Two beings meet, for the first time, near by the Syrian capital who, thenceforth, as true yoke-fellows, travel together down the ages,—revolutionizing the thought of the world, changing the course of history, touching the springs of governments, moulding the destinies of mankind. For the first time, two names appear side by side on the page of history, thenceforth destined to be neither obscured nor obliterated, standing for ever for the most beneficent lives our earth can know anything about: that "Name which is above every name," the Founder of Christianity,

<sup>1</sup> "Nicephorous compares him to a bird in the air, that in a few years flew round the world; Isidore, the Pelusiot, to a winged husbandman, that flew from place to place to cultivate the world with the most excellent rules and institutions of life. And while the other apostles did, as it were, choose this or that particular province as the main sphere of their ministry, St. Paul overran the whole to its utmost bounds and corners, planting all places where he came with the Divine doctrines of the Gospel." Cave.

and that of Paul, the Damascene convert, its ablest expounder, noblest champion, aflame with missionary ardor—a name which, Monod has well said, “is the type of human activity the most endless, and at the same time the most useful that history has cared to preserve.”<sup>2</sup> This heroic name is for ever linked to the earliest struggles and conquests of Christianity, its extension to European peoples, and entrance thus on its world-mission. “May we not believe, in a sense higher than Chrysostom ever dreamt of, that the pulses of that mighty heart are still the pulses of this world’s life—still beat in these latter ages with greater force than ever.”<sup>3</sup>

But this name was not always thus a beneficent power. At first the man stood in undisguised sympathy with the fiercest and most fanatical opposition the name and followers of Christ provoked—himself accessory to the first Christian murder and martyrdom. He stood sponsor for the violence which gave the Church the illustrious name that leads “the noble army of martyrs.” This is the brief record:

<sup>2</sup> *Saint Paul*, by the Rev. Adolphe Monod, p. 14. “A spiritual Atlas, Paul alone bears the pagan world upon his shoulders. That Roman empire which a whole people—the most powerful on earth—took seven centuries to create, this single man took one quarter of a century to create anew. It is his work, his special work, so greatly do the labors of many others lose their lustre in the presence of his labors.” *Ib.*, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Stanley, *Essays on the Apostolic Age*.

"The witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen" (Acts vii. 58).

This was by no means the only sanguinary proceeding in which he took part. In the way of sorrowful self-reflection, he says: "I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prison both men and women" (Acts xxii. 4). Even the sanctity of a man's house, what old English law styles his castle, and guards against intrusion save by legal processes, restrained not his violent hand. "As for Saul," the historian, his coadjutor afterward, goes on to narrate, "he made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison" (Acts viii. 3). By such inquisitorial acts his name became a terror to Christian fugitives far and wide. The knowledge and dread of it had preceded him to Damascus. Ananias entered this protest against ministering to him in his mental and spiritual struggles: "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem" (Acts ix. 13). It was thought a thing well-nigh impossible that this rampant and roaring lion should all at once take on the gentleness and harmlessness of the lamb.

Such was the natural man—strong and vehement in his convictions, honest and earnest in purpose, con-

scientious in his course albeit with too little sympathy and patience with men standing on the other side of questions of religious beliefs. Nevertheless, he stands in the foremost rank of the world's great men—great in intellect, in will, in work, in the measure and compass of his soul; simple, honest, courageous, confident.

The winds which open the seed-pods serve as well to scatter in every direction the light thistle-down. Said a Church father: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." Naturally they, who would not deny the Name they learned to love and revere, betook themselves to other parts. These fugitive disciples carried the Gospel with them to the cities which gave them refuge and a home. Numbers made their way to Damascus. Bent on making the Syrian capital the scene of alike cruelties which, at his un-resting hand, the holy city had witnessed, this fierce opponent of the new faith sought and obtained authority to go there and stir up the same fanatical spirit of extermination and hate.

"The leader of that martial crew  
Seems bent some mighty deed to do,  
So steadily he speeds,  
With lips firm closed and fixed eye  
Like warrior when the fight is nigh,  
Nor talk nor landscape heeds." \*

\* Keble, *Christian Year*.

Damascus, said to be the oldest city in the world, already known in the days of Abraham, was, at the time, a populous place<sup>5</sup> and centre of great commercial importance. Its situation is declared one of unrivalled beauty, standing in the midst of an extended plain of extreme fertility, at the foot of mountains as bald and sterile as Sinai. The Arabs, in Oriental extravagance, called it, "The Eye of the Desert," and "The Pearl of the East." It was a matter of a week's journey from Jerusalem, whether a-foot or on horseback.

"Man proposeth, God disposeth," writes the good George Herbert.<sup>6</sup> The contemplated scene of fresh victims of this man's exceeding madness (Acts xxvi. 11) against the adherents of Christ becomes the scene of his own full submission to the hated faith.

The sudden conversion of Paul was a momentous event. It marked the grand crisis of his life—giving to the intense energy of his nature a fresh impulse and a new direction. It was far more than the turning-point of his personal history—"the event, which," Dean Stanley well observed, "turned the fortunes of mankind." In early Christianity it took rank next in importance to the resurrection of Christ of which

<sup>5</sup> So large even the Jewish population that Nero could cause ten thousand to be executed.

<sup>6</sup> *Jacula Prudentum.*

it is the direct outcome and proof. "Both," says Dr. Schafl, "are inseparably connected; without the resurrection the conversion would have been impossible, and on the other hand the conversion of such a man and with such results is one of the strongest proofs of the resurrection."<sup>7</sup>

It was a unique occurrence; and served to place this last called of the apostles on an equal footing with the original twelve. They had been eye- and ear-witnesses of Christ; known Him after the flesh; accompanied with Him for three years and more; hung on His words; seen Him alive after His death; eaten with Him; in a word, had "handled the Word of life" (I John i. 1). What immense advantage this *personal* fellowship was to them in the way of full and direct preparation for the apostolate; in the way also of firm and abiding conviction of that whereof, at the risk of life, they were to testify—the true Divinity of Christ. Such actual sight of Christ, according to his later judgment (I Cor. ix. 1; xv. 8), was an indispensable requirement of the apostleship. What now is to make good his own disadvantage, ay, his absolute want in this regard? What can sweep in on his mind convictions quite as strong, and withal nerve him to zeal as brave and self-forgetful, as theirs? What can effectually break down in him prejudices so obstinate,

<sup>7</sup> *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. I., p. 297.

and opposition so fierce and relentless? What can make him the equal of the others in the sure confidence of an apostle of the crucified and *risen* Christ? I venture to say, nothing short of the privilege they themselves enjoyed—*seeing* in person the Lord of glory. Just this was the marvellous and overpowering vision which fell on his dazed eye as, on this sanguinary journey, he drew near the city.

Three accounts of the event, with slight differences, are given: one by the historian of the Acts; two by the apostle himself in manly self-defence, before the Jews at Jerusalem, and king Agrippa in Cæsarea (Acts xxii.; xxvi.). There is no material discrepancy.<sup>s</sup> In the main feature they are one—the dangerous persecutor's conversion by a real corporeal appearance of Christ.

This Self-manifestation came in the old form made so familiar to Hebrew minds in their Scriptures and history. There, light was ever the symbol of the Divine Presence. In sight of that queenly city of the East, suddenly Paul and his companions are smitten to the earth by an effulgence surpassing the brightness of the sun, and out of this blaze of heavenly glory comes to one ear at least an articulate

<sup>s</sup> Extravagant importance is attached by negative critics to these slight variations in the three accounts. Anybody can see that they relate only to the most immaterial circumstances. They prove nothing, as Neander says, "against the *reality of the fact*."



voice, with its personal message, full of power and meaning. It is no delusion. He was far from such a frame of mind. He heard his own name, coupled with an intelligent question that sent his thoughts sweeping along the avenues of the soul.

When a man is called by his individual name, be the voice human or divine, he takes at once an attitude of expectancy. So to this, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" answer is directly made, which may be put into this plainer English, "Who art thou, Sir?" In that first moment of dazed sense, he had not yet come to know the Speaker as *the* Lord once crucified but now risen and glorified. Not long, however, is he left in this state of bewilderment and doubt. Back comes the voice, lucid, distinct, "in the Hebrew tongue,"<sup>9</sup> the well-known language of God's ancient people, his own boyhood's tongue—no mistaking, then, its plain and positive assertion: "I AM JESUS whom thou persecutest."

This clear, ringing sign of personality at once lifts the whole transaction out of the sphere of mere ghostliness and unreality. Both pronouns are equally

<sup>9</sup> "The same language, in which, during His earthly life, He spoke to Peter and John, to the blind man by the walls of Jericho, to the woman who washed His feet with her tears—the same sacred language was used when He spoke from heaven to His persecutor on earth." *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Conybeare and Howson, Vol. I., p. 90.

emphatic and real. No less does the "I" stand for a *living* being than the "thou." It is one conscious person speaking to another conscious person. No impersonal, empty sound, like thunder, like idle wind; but articulate speech, conveying a definite message from one soul to another soul: human voice issuing from human form. It is, "I AM"—the claim of the Real Presence of the Risen One Himself, taking rank with the realness of the other post-resurrection appearances vouchsafed to the original apostles, individually and collectively. Subsequent events yield only readily and consistently to the theory of an objective, personal reality. Just this, in his own mind, makes the outward, substantial, immovable basis of his unquestionable apostolic dignity and calling. Twice he appeals to it as direct confirmation of this. "Last of all He was *seen* of me also, as one born out of due time" (I Cor. xv. 8). Still stronger his emphatic question: "Am I not an apostle?" followed immediately by this other: "Have I not *seen* Jesus Christ our Lord" (I Cor. ix. 1)? It is not possible to explain these by the suggestion of his having seen Christ during His life-time. There is no proof of this. And even if there were, it was obviously on his part no believing sight of Him, and on Christ's part no Self-authenticating appearance.

The facts clearly warrant Neander's strong state-

ment. "It belonged to the apostolic calling to testify of Christ the Risen One from a personal sight of Him. Because Christ had been seen by Paul, he stood in this respect on an equality with the other apostles; and in I Cor. xv. he evidently places the appearance of the risen and glorified Saviour, which was vouchsafed to himself, in the same category with all His other appearances after His resurrection. Hence we see how important it was for him, as well as for the other apostles, to be able to testify *from personal experience* of the great fact—the basis of Christian faith and hope—*of the real resurrection of Christ and His glorified personal existence.*"<sup>10</sup>

The realness of this appearance comes out in these further words of personal identification: "I am *Jesus of Nazareth* whom thou persecutest." Why not now and here to this staggered convict, this truth-loving, truth-pursuing man, the reassertion of His essential and personal oneness with God, in the same strong way in which He had put it to the cavilling Jews: "Before Abraham was, I AM"? Why, as Chrysostom

<sup>10</sup> *Planting and Training of the Christian Church*, p. 89. In his recent volume on *Apostolic Christianity*, Dr. Schaff says: "That Paul meant, of course, a real, objective, personal appearance of Christ from heaven, which was visible to his eyes and audible to his ears, and at the same time a revelation to his mind through the medium of the senses." *Hist. of the Christian Church*, Vol. I., p. 310.

asks, did He not plainly say, "I am the Son of God; the Word that was in the beginning; He that sitteth at the right hand of the Father; He who is in the form of God; He who stretched out the heavens; He who made the earth; He who levelled the sea; He who created the angels; He who is everywhere and filleth all things; He who was pre-existent and was begotten?"<sup>11</sup> Why just here and now this note and name of His earthly obscurity? Why this reminder of the lowliness of His earthly lot—the poverty and privation of the home at Nazareth? Because it was against Him, simply and mainly, as the Jesus of Nazareth, that the persecutor had directed his vehement zeal. He knew Him not, was in no frame of mind to know Him, in any other aspect of His being, any higher relation. Now, the despised Nazarene would flood that violent man's soul with the overwhelming conviction of that side of His person and character which hitherto, with might and main, he had so conscientiously and honestly resisted.

Hence the emphasized identity of this Living Presence and Voice, arresting progress right by the fancied scene of fresh cruelties, with that despised Prophet of Nazareth. I am JESUS the Nazarene whom thou persecutest: thou thoughtest me to be a *dead*

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, by Conybeare and Howson, Vol. I., p. 91.

man, and my name for ever sunk in oblivion, and, everywhere, against everything wouldst thrust thy conceits upon thy people, but, behold the Nazarene *lives*; the crucified One, still persecuted, still pursued in His friends and followers, is the Risen, Glorified One: dead once, now alive for evermore.

This event makes the new man as he appears the leading character in after-history. The integrity and intensity of that nature strike out a new channel. Thenceforth, no man may question his apostolic character. Had not he, too, *seen* Jesus (I Cor. ix. i; xv. 8)? There is no mistaking his sense of that Personal intervention on the Damascene road. In the face of a self-consecration immediate and unreserved (Acts ix. 20), experiences ever more trying, toils incessant and exhausting, convictions deeper the longer cherished, confidence never wavering, and death itself, cruel even as that he helped to visit on others, yet hopefully met (II Tim. iv. 6-8), how utterly impossible it is to entertain for a single moment the suspicion even of delusion. And when credit is made of his sincerity, his conscientiousness, both when wrong and right, his calmness, his wisdom, above all his humility, "a virtue which," Dean Howson so well observes, "is not less inconsistent with fanaticism than with imposture," it is quite as impossible to class St. Paul with impostors as with mere enthusiasts.

This event is the very soul of his writings. If those masterly Epistles, the admiration of all ages, the stimulus to the world's best thought ever since, the pulse of a justifying faith, have one especial peculiarity, it is the prominence given to the certainty and reality of Christ's resurrection. In the grasp of his firm faith, this forms the very groundwork of Christianity. It is no *dead* Christ he is evermore preaching; not the Christ of the Cross separately taken, but of the riven tomb, of the Easter morn. The *sight* of the Risen Jesus made the after-man—his writing and his work. If that were but a vagary, a day-dream, without substance and reality, the man must have been to himself, and his age, and not less all ages following, a profound puzzle. "On that appearance," Canon Farrar says, "all his faith was founded; on that pledge of resurrection—of immortality to himself, and to the dead who die in Christ—all his hopes were anchored. If that belief were unsubstantial, then all his life and all his labors were a delusion and a snare."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *The Life and Work of St. Paul*, Vol. I., p. 193. Further on, he says, "It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of St. Paul's conversion as one of the evidences of Christianity. That he should have passed, by one flash of conviction, not only from darkness to light, but from one direction of life to the very opposite, is not only characteristic of the man, but evidential of the power and significance of Christianity. . . . And to what does he testify respecting Jesus? To almost every single primarily important fact respecting His Incarnation, Life, Suffer-

How singularly appropriate the apostle's own word for this appearance. He says to king Agrippa, in his own account of it: "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (*ὁπτασία*—"a waking vision" Acts xxvi. 19).<sup>13</sup> The modern rationalist would read

ings, Betrayal, Last Supper, Trial, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Heavenly Exaltation. . . . The events on which the apostle relied in proof of His divinity, had taken place in the full blaze of contemporary knowledge. He had not to deal with uncertainties of criticism or assaults on authenticity. He could question, not ancient documents, but living men; he could analyze, not fragmentary records, but existing evidence. He had thousands of means close at hand whereby to test the reality or unreality of the Resurrection in which, up to this time, he had so passionately and contemptuously disbelieved. In accepting this half-crushed and wholly execrated faith he had everything in the world to lose—he had nothing conceivable to gain; and yet in spite of all—overwhelmed by a conviction which he felt to be irresistible—Saul, the Pharisee, became a witness of the Resurrection, a preacher of the Cross" (pp. 202-204).

<sup>13</sup> The word is peculiar to the author of the third Gospel and the Acts (St. Luke i. 22; xxiv. 23; Acts xxvi. 19). It is clear, that by *ὁπτασία* he meant something more objective and real than by the more frequently occurring *ὄρανα*—a purely subjective vision. "All the attempts of Baur and his school to treat the event as a *visionary* product from the laboratory of Paul's own thoughts are exegetical impossibilities, in presence of which Baur himself at last stood still acknowledging a *mystery*." Meyer, *Comm. on Acts in loc.* Medd sees in this manifestation of the personal Christ, in His glorified humanity to the Damascene traveller, mad with hate, as in that to St. Stephen just prior, and in that to St. John subsequently at Patmos, something analogous to those appearances, in human or angelic form, under the Old Covenant, which, as precludes and preparations, heralded the Incarnation. *The One Mediator*, p. 344.

here optical delusion. The assumption sets at defiance all the laws governing human conduct. That this man should have been turned aside from the hostility of strong and honest convictions by the mere play of fancy, believe it who may! He saw behind the veil of things.

A common mistake in looking out upon the material world is in ascribing to it a permanence and lastingness that in no way belong to it. Forgetting the divine caution, "the fashion of this world passeth away," men lose sight of its phenomenal character even while grasping its illusive worth. We live, in fact, in a world of vain shadows,

"Waiting for the golden morn to rise."

Only the things beyond the veil are enduring and eternal. The great realities of our being lie beyond the sweep of mortal vision. Happy the man who looks through all these earthly shadows to the everlasting substances that cast them, and is so thoughtful as to order his whole life under their shaping power. He is first the *seer*, and then the loyal servant of the most High. So with Moses. Back of mountains were the *eternal* fastnesses. "Before the mountains were brought forth," we hear him say, "or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God."

The vision of the seer, playing so conspicuous



a part in the Divine Revelation, earlier and later, is this clear insight into the depth and merit of eternal things, vouchsafed to the favored few. It was accorded here to St. Paul. There breaks on his inward eye, from the near world of the eternal and the true, a vision of the *Risen Jesus*, that makes his persecuting life with all its honest zeal, a life of utter vanity and shame in his own eyes, and makes the only life worth living the life of hardship, and toil, and trial, and self-sacrifice in His behalf "who," using this noble apostle's own language, "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25).

In its reality and lasting effect, this appearance of the living Christ, by the Damascus way-side, takes rank with the remarkable vision accorded Israel's youthful prophet in the temple (Is. vi. 1-8). Vouchsafed to Isaiah in his early manhood, he was by means of it ever after consecrated, ay, impelled to the prophetic function. There was no breaking from it, nor yet the slightest desire to do so. "What he saw was," as another puts it, "a vision of the real through the phenomenal, the eternal through the temporal. When once he had seen it, the events and changes of time could no longer sway him with their former power. For him the pomps and splendors of earth had no longer any glory by reason of

the more excellent glory behind and beyond them, and which they vainly strove to express.”<sup>14</sup>

So it was with St. Paul. Nothing ever served to break the force of his entire self-consecration after this vision of the persecuted One and His personal identity with the poor persecuted ones. Labors, multiplied with each day, brought no discouragement and no drawback. The scaffold and axe of a Nero inspired neither terror nor weakness. Loyalty to the Master, thus strangely commissioning him, was the result of this “heavenly vision”—loyalty to the bitter end.

“Why persecutest thou ME?” was the first arrestive word. How lovingly and completely Christ identifies Himself with His people! In suffering sympathy, what this but the echo of those other precious words? “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto ME” (St. Matt. xxv. 40). You touch no member of the body that the head feels not the shock. Blessed thought! Christ and His people inseparably one! Together suffering, together glorified!

What honor, too, Christ Himself puts on His Church, its holy offices, and appointed officers!

<sup>14</sup> The Rev. Samuel Cox, *The Vision of Isaiah*, Expositor, Second Series, Vol. II., p. 18.

There is abroad a wide depreciation of Church order and ordinances. Eying exclusively the subjective and emotional side of religion, there are those who labor to persuade us, that ecstatic feelings, pious frames, strong convictions, individual experiences, are everything, the vital and essential thing. Sacraments are but dead weights on the gushing spirit of piety—ceremonies proper enough to be observed, but making no necessary part of the Christian salvation. Sacramental acts they would away with. Institutional religion is at a discount.

Surely this flies right in the face of the whole order of grace as God Himself has established it, and which, for the sake of souls, and truth, and a sound Gospel, in its own full and round sense, should be exposed and corrected. Surely there is that here in flat contradiction with our Lord's own procedure in this memorable case, and the plain direction given to this trembling convert. Does the pretension of going direct to Christ, without the intervention ordinarily of the Church and Sacraments, receive any endorsement from this recognized authority? Does He dispense with His own ordinances? "Does He take back to Himself, even in this one instance, and for a special purpose, that which he had commissioned His visible Church to do in His name?" Even here, no intensity of feeling, no honesty of purpose, "no visions and

revelations of the Lord," are allowed to supersede the administration of Holy Baptism.

In its bearing on sound Church principles and practice, most important and instructive are the Lord's direction and the persecutor's prompt action. Doubtless, Christ is the sinner's only Saviour. Forgiveness is from Him alone. And He is here face to face with this subdued and crushed man, "to do this work, if it is to be done independently of the Church on earth." But so far from repudiating the ministry which He had Himself instituted, and pouring contempt on His own ordinances, He does, in fact, by His direct act of recognition, put on them the highest honor, as constituting in His own estimate the Divine order of salvation.

In the view of so much of our radical Protestantism, what a mockery of this convicted man's feelings must have been the *present* Christ's own direction: "Arise, and go into the city, and *it shall be told thee* what thou must do" (Acts ix. 6)! And in this same view, how actually misleading Ananias's subsequent appeal and action: "Why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts xxii. 16). To every thought of this kind, Paul's prompt action administers a just and withering rebuke.

By Christ's own appointment and present direction, by the unbroken practice of the Church from Pente-

cost onward, by its formulated teachings, in this important particular squaring with the Divine word and order, the Sacraments are declared to be “generally necessary to salvation.” Despise and neglect them not. Think not to honor Christ by putting dishonor on His Church.

“He who can part from country and from kin,  
And scorn delights, and tread the thorny way,  
A heavenly crown, through toil and pain, to win—  
He who reviled can tender love repay,  
And buffeted, for bitter foes can pray—  
He who, upspringing at his Captain's call,  
Fights the good fight, and when at last the day  
Of fiery trial comes, can nobly fall—  
Such were a saint—or more—and such the holy Paul!”



XIV.

The Potent and Perpetual Presence.

“Come, kingdom of our God, Sweet reign of light and love!  
Shed peace and hope and joy abroad,  
And wisdom from above.

“Come, kingdom of our God, And make the broad earth Thine;  
Stretch o'er her lands and isles the rod  
That flowers with grace divine.

“Soon may all tribes be blest With fruit from Life's glad tree,  
And in its shade like brothers rest,  
Sons of one family.”



#### XIV.

### The Potent and Perpetual Presence.

*"Lo, I AM with you alway, even unto the end of the world."*  
—ST. MATT. XXVIII. 20.

THESE are not the words of a mere man; much less a dead man. On the hypothesis of pure humanity they indicate either the vainest self-conceit, or the boldest presumption, or the strangest self-ignorance. In the whole history of the race, no man ever made a claim at all comparable to this—so tremendous, so self-asserting.

They are the words of an everliving and potent Personality. The Risen Christ it is who says this. No Being more alive to-day. He, least of any, is to be remanded to the fossils of a defunct age. Enthroned is He, a perennial power in the bosom of human life and history, guiding thought, moulding character, shaping society, touching the springs of the best and wisest legislation. How well the unknown writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews named him, the "ONCE FOR

ALL" (x. 10), the One in whose living person the power of redemption holds for all time—not, however, by the memory simply of a bygone event, but in a perpetual, inexhaustible efficacy, an undying *now*, keeping step with the actual march of mankind. At the close of eighteen centuries the power of this Name is greater than ever: shown in the wonderful activities of an aggressive Christianity, in efficient care for the bodies as well as the souls of men, in a womanhood unshackled and sanctified, in the general toning up of society, in a purer and better civilization changing the "habitations of cruelty" into bright and happy homes; and this by means of a Divine organization to which this potent Presence is perpetually linked. Not the words, then, of a dead man, but of the Head of the world's New Creation, to whom "all power is given in heaven and in earth."

All authority, to be respected and self-respecting, must rest in a personal power back of and greater than itself. Back of the Apostolic Commission stands this grand and august Figure, once dead, but now alive for evermore. And considered in its full purpose and scope it takes on transcendent importance and grandeur. Across all the centuries, the holy ministry, in the persons of the original Apostles, is here summoned to a mission as beneficent as it is grand. It is not short of the conquest of

the world to Christ: the vindication of His claim to universal homage: the enfranchisement of humanity from the power and bondage of sin: the planting of the Church in all the world, the one organ and medium of salvation, despite persecution the most cruel, prejudices and hate the most inveterate, and after-ages of unbelief, indifference and negation the most strange and stubborn.

Its ambition is not like that of the warrior who finds in the struggle itself the inspiration that leads him on; nor like that of the statesman who finds his impulse and motive in high political position and power. Not self-glory in any way, but simply the good of others at the sacrifice of self, is the aim and end of the holy ministry—the certain expectation of all counted worthy of this “high calling.” Its track lay altogether apart from the path of worldly greatness and renown. Indeed for the longest period its hard toil was to know nothing like popular endorsement. The voice of the people was against it. The men who thus labored for the good of mankind suffered at their hands; were hurried off to prison, to torture, to death.

Nor from the apostles themselves was there the slightest concealment in this matter. The Master’s frank and candid words were, “Ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake” (St. Luke xxi. 17).

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves" (St. Matt. x. 16). They were sure to find the world a hostile, and no friendly power. The line of advance was to be along a path made slippery by their own, and the blood of an army of martyrs.

What they encountered was but a prophecy of all the future. The scene of conflict has, indeed, changed. Infernal cruelty is now at an end. Not the bodies of the saints, but the deepest essence of the faith is now assailed by a scholarship both respectable and profound. This destructive work is not to be met by harsh and hard names, but matched by learning and scholarship quite as profound and respectable. The fight waxes hottest now about the centralities of the faith—its right to exist and dominate in an exclusive way the thought, and life, and destiny of the race.

The ministry cannot affect indifference to these attacks. Eyes self-closed to the danger will not serve it, while negation is striking its ruthless axe at the Living Root of this wide-branching Mustard-Tree. At what irreverent work does negative criticism stand aghast? However a reverent John with bowed head may stand without the broken sepulchre, a spirit yet bolder than Peter's pushes within and tears to very shreds the sacred napkins it finds. It

has subjected nothing to so severe an ordeal as the Evangelical facts. All the better this. If the Gospel stand, it stands on a basis which subsequent criticism cannot possibly shake.

With this negative spirit of the times, it is by no means surprising that religious indifference should be so wide-spread and alarming. It could hardly be otherwise than that many should be disastrously affected. In the history of mankind nothing is more plain and painful than the disposition to put away the thought of God as a prevailing and practical principle. Whatever now strengthens this disposition weakens the personal hold and influence of religion. Proof of this is found in the intense secularism of the age. Relegating the faith to the lumber-room of exploded traditions, how quick it is to dismiss all personal concern about God and the future, and surrender itself to the attainment of wealth with an avidity that knows neither scruples nor bounds. Everywhere its indurating tendency is felt and deplored. It touches with moral atrophy manly powers and womanly virtues which otherwise might glow with the fervor of a holy consecration.

Doubtless, this general indifference is greatly aggravated by controversial antagonisms no less strange than stubborn. The divided state of Christendom is a formidable obstacle in the way of all evangelical

work. To souls anxious to come to a knowledge of the truth nothing is really more perplexing. It would seem, that persecution for its own narrow creed is the dearest of all things to poor human nature; and hence, age after age, the war of sects—hostile camps in the face of a common enemy. Let Christians settle their differences among themselves, say the careless crowd, and then go forth to the work of winning the world to Christ.

Under these circumstances, whence is the Minister to get inspiration for his work? Through all difficulties and discouragements, what can be back of him a sustaining presence and power, equal to the greatness of his work and the grandeur of his opportunities?

It was to a grand enterprise—the enfranchisement of a down-trodden people—Moses was called. The work required a man of the most heroic temper. No wonder that even he timidly and self-distrustingly drew back from the herculean task. At all events, a work so difficult and so doubtful, with so much against it and so little, indeed, to inspire hope and confidence in its final success, is not to be undertaken in a man's own strength. So thought this man of masterly wisdom (Acts vii. 22), "mighty in words and deeds"; and he makes bold to ask for authority back of himself: the endorsement of a Name, itself

the synonym of "all power in heaven and in earth," and the guarantee against failure.

Out of the *burning* bush, of old the symbol of the Divine Presence, there came this august Voice, say, "I AM hath sent me unto you." We have already met and considered the significance of this four-lettered name—JHVVH—the exponent of the Personal, Absolute, and Self-existent One, the Primal Cause of all being: "HE WHO IS."

To this "man of God" it was everything that the ETERNAL was back of him and with him to bring the fugitive nation on its way to independence and self-hood; that he was in no way *self-sent*, nor went on any ambitious errand of his own. Amid the stupendous difficulties encountered, and not the least, by any means, the intractability of the people themselves, what inspiration and support he drew from the fact, that it was a work of Divine determination, and to its full and final success the Covenant-keeping God was Self-committed.

As Moses was not *self-sent*, so neither the Christian Ministry. Its authority rests in a commission more directly and unmistakably Divine. A surer, though no higher, warrant is here guaranteed than was ever vouchsafed to the old leader and law-giver of Israel. An *impersonal* Voice carries not along with it anything like the authority of a real, veritable, and historical

Presence. Back of the Apostolic Commission stands, in peerless Majesty, the RISEN JESUS, who neither scruples nor shrinks from making the boldest proclamation that ever fell on mortal ears: "ALL power is given unto ME"—as the very presence of Jehovah among men and not merely His representative according to some, as "the Brightness of His glory and the Express Image of His Person," as "God manifested in the flesh," as the Eternal Word made man for us men and for our salvation, as the very Life and so the very Light of the world—"go, *therefore*," penetrated and possessed by a sense of this Personal centre and fulness of answering authority, to the grand work of Christianizing the nations. And in view of the greatness of the work, the difficulties, discouragements, and disappointments incident to it, and in view of the intense worldliness of the age, the skeptical thought honeycombing society, and the religious apathy pervading all classes, I am persuaded that now, more than ever, ministers need an overwhelming sense of the absolute authority of God in which their Commission is rooted and grounded. Thus happily the poet has expressed this necessary conviction:

"Eternal Word! God's true and only Son,  
 Maker, and Lord, and Heir, and Judge of all;  
 First-born of every creature; Holy One!  
 We praise Thy name, and on Thy Name we call.



“Jehovah dwells from everlasting years  
In silence and in solitude concealed;  
And yet from everlasting He appears  
In Thee to all His universe revealed.

“Ever in Thee the Father is revealed,  
Ever in Thee all things are reconciled,  
Ever in Thee our sins and wounds are healed;—  
Glory to Thee, the Pure and Undeiled.”

In its startling freshness, how wonderful the effect of this language on the apostles! It was the spring of fearless, faithful, unfailing activity. Souls overshadowed with gloom thenceforth took on a boldness that neither difficulties nor dangers could daunt. What uncommon force of purpose, strength of character, heroic and self-sacrificing devotion it inspired! A Commission that swept beyond the narrow confines of Judea, beyond the short limit of their own life-time, beyond their own nation and age, that took in the very end of the world, that was the full guarantee of His never-failing presence and support, turned craven cowards into lion-hearted men, immortal heroes, in the face of personal violence and death itself, consecrating their powers and energies, their all to the preaching of the Gospel of the risen Christ and the establishment of His indestructible kingdom.

This language is not to be put down to the score of audacious conceit and empty gasconade. What

great leader of men ever dared to conceive of power reaching down all the ages, to forecast a future so brilliant, so enduring, influenced by his name, shaped by his course, linked to his fortunes? It outstrips everything like human ambition. In the case of an Alexander, Cæsar, Bonaparte, founders of mighty empires, leaders of mighty armies, it was a merciful kindness which shut out from their view the crushing events of a near future. Yet here is One, who, taking in all the contingencies of earth, "the chances and changes of this mortal life," the sudden revulsions in human thought and feeling, the inconstancy of popular enthusiasm, the vicissitudes of fortune, the collapse of empires, and sweeping with clear prevision the utmost limit of historic life, is bold enough to make the announcement of a universal and indestructible kingdom, holding in His perpetual presence and power. From an historic point of view, such stability of empire was without precedent. The four great monarchies, which successively ruled the world had passed away like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor—the vain dream of a sceptre unbroken and enduring.

How could this poor artisan of Nazareth, without the prestige of a name, without patronage, with no association with the influential classes of society, with the authorities, civil and ecclesiastical, inimical

and bitter, promise Himself and His humble followers a different fortune, a Name with undying power, taking permanent hold upon the thought and life of the world! It seems a scheme too broad, and bold, and brilliant to have entered the mind even of the world's mightiest hero. What to him could have been nothing other than an impossible conception is to this village Carpenter a quiet consciousness, a foregone conclusion. "Here is, as it seems, a Galilean peasant, surrounded by a few followers taken like Himself from the lowest orders of society; yet He deliberately proposes to rule all human thought, to make Himself the Centre of all human affection, to be the Lawgiver of humanity, and the object of man's adoration."

Nor is the natural force of this language to be

<sup>1</sup> Canon Liddon, *Our Lord's Divinity*, p. 116. "To Jesus alone, the simple Galilean carpenter, it happens, that, having never seen a map of the world in His whole life, or heard the name of half the great nations on it, He undertakes, coming out of His shop, a scheme as much vaster and more difficult than that of Alexander, as it proposes more and what is more divinely benevolent! This thought of a universal kingdom, cemented in God—why, the immense Roman Empire of His day, constructed by so many ages of war and conquest, is a bauble in comparison, both as regards the extent and the cost! And yet the rustic tradesman of Galilee propounds even this for His errand, and that in a way of assurance, as simple and quiet, as if the immense reach of His plan were, in fact, a matter to Him of no consideration." Bushnell, *Nature and the Supernatural*, p. 299.

broken by the suggestion of rhetorical exaggeration. It may not be emptied of its Personal contents, its sublime and awful meaning by any suggestion of Oriental extravagance of speech. In the *real, spiritual Presence* here indicated, these wondrous words express a fundamental and substantial fact.

Just as little, then, are they to be taken in a purely representative sense, as though reaching the fulness of their meaning and purpose in the essential office and efficient agency of the Holy Spirit. In human affairs it is no uncommon thing to speak of a man as present by proxy. Thus, a sovereign may be present by his ambassador; a client in court by his attorney. But in such cases the principal is really absent; not present at all in his own personal character, the sense in which this language on the lips of the risen Christ is clearly to be understood.

The necessary agency of the Third Person of the adorable Trinity in spiritual things is no matter of question. It is promptly conceded, that the application of redemption to the needs of the individual conscience, is His official work. His Pentecostal descent was the birth-day of the Church (Acts ii. 1-4), and the inauguration of the new order of life. Properly enough, His presence and power are solemnly invoked at every ordination service. In the Baptismal formula, His name is coupled with that of the

Father and the Son. He is recognized by Christ Himself as the Author of the Divine life in the soul (St. John iii. 5); and the new life thus begun is by Him sustained and advanced in us until the perfect day. He gives to the Divine word its convicting energy, making it "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow—a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12). And the indwelling of Christ in the human spirit—the whole process of sanctification, growing conformity to the Divine image, increasing meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light—all this is by His action. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (I Cor. vi. 17). However, it is written in this same Epistle, "No one can say that Jesus Christ is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (xii. 3)—mutual and simultaneous, not independent and exclusive, action: the presence and operation of the Holy Ghost neither working nor supplying the absence of Christ, but, in fact, accomplishing His presence under its most abiding form and widest efficiency. The coming of the One Divine Person was not in effect the utter banishment of the Other from the very world He came to save. "Let us not suppose for a moment that God the Holy Ghost comes in such sense that God the Son remains

away. No; He has not so come that Christ does not come; but rather He comes, that Christ may come in His coming"—making fully and actually at hand, across centuries and continents, the powers of eternal salvation.

Believe, then, as firmly as we may in the presence and necessary agency of the Holy Spirit we do as certainly believe in the presence—*propria persona*—of Christ and not by mere proxy—a special presence for a special purpose and end. So the Divine force of the Apostolic Commission when once its profound depth of meaning is sounded. This it is that makes the Ministry a *Christian* ministry: invests them with ministerial character, constitutes their authority, and gives their acts validity and binding force.

For long centuries, it has been a point of angry controversy, how Christ bodily present in heaven, whither He ascended and is now seated at the right hand of God, can yet in any true and real sense be present with His Church on earth? Every approach to the question is, it would seem, embarrassed by inveterate notions of terrestrial life and limitations. It is persistently forgotten that His visible and corruptible body has put on incorruption; the material elements wholly transfigured and glorified, and so far forth beyond the ordinary operations of time and space.

Even in His post-resurrection state, evidences are at hand of the untrammelled freeness of Christ's glorified body. With the marks of indubitable corporeity and its indubitable identity with the body nailed to the cross, taken down from the cross, and laid in the grave, there are not wanting as indubitable proofs of its decided spirituality. His several appearances show a superterrestrial body in no way hindered and impeded in its movements by earthly limitations and laws; coming and going much like a spirit, wholly improbable and impossible under ordinary conditions. Suddenly He stands in the midst of the disciples, entering through closed doors, inviting to the closest and most satisfactory scrutiny of personal and bodily identity, and, then, in just as abrupt and mysterious a way, disappearing again. For the forty post-resurrection days, He resided in an invisible region from which at will and without let or hindrance He came forth, and into which He again retired. Marvellous! Now visible, now invisible—His spiritual corporeity governed and controlled by no earthly laws! Outward environments are set at naught. Here was the same body that was crucified and buried; and yet not what it then was. This much may be said, it was a glorified body, a spiritual body—whatever that may be.

And later on, after His visible and bodily ascension

to heaven, as if to put beyond all dispute the free, untrammelled action of His glorified body, a most remarkable instance is given of His unmistakable presence on earth. The apostle Paul never doubted for a moment the reality of his *sight* of the risen and ascended Christ, issuing in two facts cut and carved in indelible lines in post-Christian history—the fierce persecutor’s marvellous conversion, and his noble, fearless, faithful advocacy of the cause so violently opposed at first. No mere vision could have given such confidence and boldness. And yet, through a long ministry of toils, and trials, and perils “more abundant” than any of the original disciples had to undergo, it was ever to him the direct and unmistakable evidence of his apostolic office and character, putting him on an equal footing with them who for three years had enjoyed His personal ministry. It was, as has just appeared, bold and repeated appeal he made to the literalness of that sight.

Can Christ’s body, then, be in heaven and yet on earth? If not, then, this true and literal sight of Christ, the seal and confirmation of St. Paul’s equal apostleship, was after all a deception and cheat.

Just this, in fact, is the great mystery with which we have here to do—Christ really and truly in heaven, and yet “verily and indeed” on earth. Explain it who can? Deny it, and give the lie to Christ’s own



words, and surrender all the comfort, and courage, and support that guaranteed Presence gives amid the trials and disappointments of arduous ministerial work? Never.

He is no banished King. He has Himself linked heaven and earth together as the one sphere of His gracious activity. "All power is given unto Me *in heaven and in earth.*" It may be far easier, indeed, to think of Him as being there, and having power there rather than here. Thrusting God out of the world, putting Him beyond the skies serenely unmindful of all that transpires here below, this is the danger which most besets modern thought. And similar danger threatens in regard to Christ—remanding Him to a distant sphere of inactivity and unconcern for the human world which He loved so much and for which He sacrificed so much. But when He does Himself tell us that the Spirit shall take of the things of Christ and show them unto men, surely His witness is to be not to an absent, but present Saviour—right among us with all the power of an accomplished and sufficient atonement; as really and truly present on earth, as truly and really present in heaven.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "Our endeavor," says Westcott, "must be not to recall the past work of Christ with the most vivid power, but to realize His present union with His Church." *The Revelation of the Risen Lord*, p. xv.

Profoundly significant, then, this personal pronoun! "Lo, I AM with you"—perfect God and perfect man: one, therefore, with that earliest proclamation of Self-existence from Horeb's burning yet unconsumed bush, I AM THAT I AM; one with Isaiah's IMMANUEL—Bethlehem's great Wonder, the Personal Realization of that "GOD WITH US"; and stands for one and the same Being who was bold enough to assert His essential Identity with the absolute and self-subsistent Jehovah (St. John viii. 58); who claimed to be the absolute Way to God, the absolute Truth of the Divine Revelation, the absolute Principle of Life, natural, spiritual, and eternal (St. John xiv. 5; xi. 25, 26). This Being, the glorious Hero of the Easter morn, Conqueror of death and Hades, Olivet's ascended and glorified King, does, now and here, proclaim a continual Personal presence on earth, the everlasting Stay and Support of all, age after age, sent forth, in His name, to the ends of the earth to preach His Gospel and administer His holy Sacraments. It is not "I will be," as though it were a glorious reservation for special emergency, but "I AM with you," the present tense of the substantive verb *to be*—the exponent of Self-subsistent, ever-living and everywhere present Deity—to whom there is no heaven and earth, separately taken; no distance in space as there is none in time, "to whom there is

neither future nor past, but one unchanging and eternal NOW."

For this abiding Divine-human Presence—bridging all space as all time, efficacious everywhere and always to its own saving end—Hooker suggested the happy term *conjunctive*.<sup>3</sup> Nor are illustrations wanting of the presence of such a life-force going beyond material bounds and limitations. How distant we are in point of time from the primal head of humanity, and yet a common nature and a common life are seen stretching onward, in the strangest diversity of races and conditions, through all the intervening ages! The top-most branches of the oak are remote in space from the common root in which they stand, yet is the root present in them by an all-pervading, immaterial, and invisible life. This mystery of nature finds its full parallel in the higher sphere of the Spirit in the presence and power of the new life steadily flowing from Him who is "Head over all things to the Church."

<sup>3</sup> "For His body being a part of that nature, which whole nature is presently joined unto Deity wheresoever Deity is, it followeth that His bodily substance hath everywhere a presence of true conjunction with Deity. And forasmuch as it is by virtue of that conjunction made the body of the Son of God, by whom it was made a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, this giveth it a *presence of force and efficacy* throughout all generations of men." *Eccles. Polity*, Book V. lv. 6, 9.

Besides, rather, because personal, this Presence is of a corporate and institutional, and so of an historical and permanent, character and form. "Lo, I AM with you *alway even unto the end of the world.*" No head without a body; no king without a kingdom; and "just as little a perfect Redeemer without a Church. Christ is made complete in His people."<sup>4</sup>

The primary and only right conception of society is institutional, under its threefold forms—Family, State, Church. The family branches out. The unit multiplies. The circle widens, and a wider government is an absolute necessity. Out of the family arises the commonwealth. Civil government, be it monarchy, empire, or republic, is a necessity of our nature. Said Aristotle, "Man is by nature a political being." Kings and presidents, parliaments and legislative assemblies, laws and courts of justice, judges and intervening attorneys, officers of higher and lower rank, are indispensable to public order and individual safety. The due administration of justice, the maintenance of social order, the protection of private rights are not possible without them. Anarchy and confusion tread quickly on the heels of their subversion. The social fabric totters to ruin when they are struck down. All interests, private and public, suffer; all ranks smart under the wound. Everything like attempted inde-

<sup>4</sup> Ullmann, *The Distinctive Character of Christianity.*

pendence of civil institutions is only and always mischievous; works personal damage and social disturbance. Says highest authority, "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. xiii. 1)—no mere human device then, but a divine ordinance for the greatest good of the greatest number; heaven's representative of law and order among men.

Civil history presents no grander spectacle than the continuous existence of the English nation for a thousand years. From the fusion of the Heptarchy, making out of the several fragments a single nation subject to one king, amenable to one law, that people have held together amid constant changes through this long lapse of time. The corporate idea has made all their greatness and glory: the correction of no evils warranting the breaking up of the organic life of the nation. In that long and checkered history, England has taught the world this one great lesson: the immeasurable advantages of constitutional government.

Christianity is of alike institutional and historic character. Christ came to set up a kingdom of righteousness, of "grace and truth" on the earth. His own first emphatic theme was, "*The Gospel of the Kingdom*" (St. Matt. iv. 23), not a Gospel of abstract ideas, theological dogmas, religious speculations, but a concrete, outward, visible, spiritual reality. To Pontius Pilate He said, "Thou sayest [rightly] that

I am a King" (St. John xviii. 37). His purpose came to no crushing failure. Under the mighty power of the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 1), after the very pattern of earthly kingdoms, Christianity is seen from the first taking on outward, visible, historic organization and form; standing in a system of ordinances, offices, and officers of Divine appointment, in a society, or Christian commonwealth. Hence a Divine institution—"The Body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 23)—instinct with Divine life and power, challenging man's faith and obedience as the one organ and medium of salvation onward to the millennial kingdom and glory.

The economy of redemption is thus seen, in the disappearance of Christ after the flesh, to have come to no abrupt and inglorious end. His Ascension was itself in order to the descent of the Holy Ghost, and that in order to the full organization of the Church, making room for His continuous and far more effective presence by the Spirit. As thus included in the great Ascension-gift, the Church comes forward as the necessary historic continuity and complement of the Incarnation, a constituent part of that "great Mystery of Godliness."

The Church, therefore, is no happy accident, no outward appendage, no device simply as an aid to piety, but of the very *essence* of Christianity, making

the powers of eternal salvation actually and always at hand. In this view there is sober truth in the maxim: "No Church, no Christianity." Because it is an integral and necessary part of Christianity, it finds its own proper place in the Creed, an object of faith along with other kindred supernatural facts reaching on together to their one gracious purpose and end. On this vital point most instructive and most emphatic is the unvarying order of the Primitive Faith. That order "takes in everywhere the idea of the Church; takes it in also under the very aspect of which we are now speaking, as being of the essence of Christianity, and not simply one of its outward adjuncts. The doctrine or fact of the Church is not in the Creed by accident."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Nevin's *Thoughts on the Church*, *Mer. Rev.*, 1858, p. 191. "The article of the Church is in the Creed, not just by wilful determination on the part of the framers of the symbol, but by the constitutional necessities of the Creed itself. It is the necessary outbirth of the Christian faith, keeping pace with the progress of its glorious object, just at the point where it comes to view. As Christ's glorification makes room for the mission of the Holy Ghost, so the mission of the Holy Ghost unfolds itself with necessary consequence in the constitution of the Holy Catholic Church. Blot out that article, and the whole Creed is mutilated and broken in its sense." . . . "The grace which starts in Christ's birth, and flows onward through His life, His death upon the cross, His descent to Hades, His resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of God, and the sending of the Holy Ghost, is the same that then discharges its full stream into the bosom of the

Everything, then, like attempted independence of the Church and its Sacraments, in the matter of salvation, can only work spiritual damage and loss. The hyperspiritualism of the Quaker, turning everything here into subjective sentiment, "inward light," as the phrase runs, and the pure negativism of the major part of people who affect to believe they can be saved outside of the Church as well as in it and by it, destroy alike, in the end, everything like historic and institutional Christianity, and turn the whole mission of Christ into hollow mockery and sham. Away with every such wretched caricature of Divine grace that makes the Church naught but

"A painted ship upon a painted ocean."

We may not, in such way, banish Christ from the world He came to save, either by relegating Him to the dead and distant past, or remanding Him to His native and far-off heaven. He came to be a perennial power of life and salvation—a *present* redemption for the generations coming and going. Hence the Church, the greatest of all institutions, an out-

Church, and that is poured forth from this again in the benefits of redemption, from the remission of sins onward to the life everlasting. Beyond all question, the Creed means to affirm the being of the Church, as an indispensable link in the scheme of salvation, and as something not accidental merely but essential to the constitution of Christianity." *Ib.*, pp. 192, 193.



ward, visible, historic organization, with holy offices and duly authenticated officers, coming down to our own day from the very day of Pentecost. It makes the best commentary on our Lord's precious promise; and Him, in all His saving merit, the Contemporary of each and every age.

Not a thing, then, of yesterday. It has survived the wrecks of ages. More than a thousand years old! Back of the English monarchy, English law, and English literature, back of Alfred the Great, back of the Heptarchy was the Church of Christ! What historic changes it has outlived: outlived that colossal empire which, in its high officials crowding into the first places, in His very birth crowded out the Christ-child from the Bethlehem inn. This is the one marvel of history: the great Caesar dead! the humble Galilean, the hated and crucified, still living, and still holding in His gentle but moulding hand, more potencies of earth, of human history, of human society, of human progress, of human homes, of human hearts and lives, than the mighty Augustus ever dreamed of in the palmiest days of his greatness and his power.

Framed in its scroll of blood, the name of Napoleon still lives in history; once potent. It moves no soul to-day; awakens no enthusiasm; quickens no pulse. That name has lost its prestige and power,

and within the century even which gave the man birth.<sup>6</sup>

This other Name—standing for “all power in heaven and in earth”—is, after the longest centuries, the mightiest Factor in the world to-day; the very Synonym and Symbol of a perpetual and universal Presence kindling activities of the widest and most beneficent character; the one Source of inspiration, confidence, and courage in all earnest ministerial work the world over.

<sup>6</sup> When an exile in St. Helena, he said himself to Marshal Bertrand, “My armies have forgotten me even while living, as the Carthaginian army forgot Hannibal. Such is our power! A single battle lost crushes us, and adversity scatters our friends. Nations pass away, thrones crumble; but the Church remains. Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded His empire on love; and, at this hour, millions of men would die for Him.” Quoted by Dr. Schaff in his *Person of Jesus*, p. 328. Abbot's *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol. II., p. 616.









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